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FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

ARABIA

(Persian Gulf, Saudi Arabia and the Yemen)

PART 10

January to December 1956

SECRET

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FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING ARABIA—PART 10

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

CHAPTER I.—PERSIAN GULF

EA 1015/16

No. 1

SULTAN'S VIEWS ON FUTURE ORGANISATION OF OMAN

Sir Bernard Burrows to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received January 31)

(No. 5. Confidential)
Sir,

*Bahrain,
January 23, 1956.*

One of the objects of my recent visit to the Sultan at Muscat was to discover what progress was being made in consolidating his newly acquired hold over the interior of Muscat and Oman and what were his ideas about the future organisation and development of the country.

2. The Sultan had, as is well known, returned to Muscat after an epoch-making journey from his summer capital at Salalah, near the border of the Aden Protectorate, to the interior of Oman, which his forces had occupied a few days before, and thence through Buraimi to the Batinah Coast at Sohar and down the coast to Muscat, where he had received a remarkably enthusiastic welcome from his people. He was intending to stay less than a month in Muscat before returning to Salalah until the autumn. He hoped to travel on the return journey by the Wadi Samail, which cuts directly into the interior from Sib, a few miles up the Batinah Coast from Muscat. This route has not previously been practicable for motor traffic, but work was already being done on it. At the time of my visit there were in Muscat some 30 or 40 tribal Shaikhs from all over the country who had come to pay their respects to the Sultan. Many of them had never been to Muscat before and represented tribes whose loyalty had previously been doubtful, to say the least. Among them was Ahmed bin Mohammed al Harthi, who had played the most prominent part on the tribal side in the operations leading to the occupation of Nizwa, and who has supplanted his uncle, Saleh bin Isa, as head of the Harth tribe and unofficial leader of the Hinawi faction. Others present included the sons of the Shaikh of the Beni Hina who is standing surety for the good behaviour of the ex-Imam, the latter being a member of that tribe and now residing in the Shaikh's house. These Shaikhs were all invited to a dinner which the Sultan gave for me and Her Majesty's Consul-General. I subsequently arranged for a party of them at their own request to be taken on board H.M.S. *Loch Lomond* (Commander B. M. D. l'Anson) in which I had travelled to Muscat, and for them to see a demonstration of the ship's armament, with which they were greatly impressed. The presence of these Shaikhs in Muscat was a symbol of the almost universal acceptance by the tribes of the restoration of the Sultan's authority in the interior. The only two individuals of any prominence who have not demonstrated their respect for the Sultan are Saleh bin Isa who, however, went to Salalah after the occupation of Nizwa, thinking that the Sultan was still there, and whose present whereabouts are uncertain, and Talib, brother of the ex-Imam, who is now reported to have escaped to Saudi Arabia. Neither of them has any following in the country.

3. The Sultan explained to me his ideas for the future military organisation of his forces. These seem to me on generally satisfactory lines. They provide for more centralised control than hitherto through a Chief of Staff, who will be responsible directly to the Sultan and will be in operational as well as administrative control of the Muscat Infantry, the Sohar Force and the Field Force. These forces will in fact become units of a single force rather than separate entities as they have been up to now. A squadron will be kept permanently at Nizwa, another will be placed in the Sharqiya district in the mountains south of Muscat and a detachment will keep open the Wadi Samail. In addition there will be garrisons on the present scale at Muscat, Ibri, Buraimi and Sohar. The Dhofar Force will continue to be a separate command, though to some extent administered from Muscat. I urged on the Sultan the creation

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of a mobile reserve in addition to these garrison forces and he is considering this. He readily accepted the ideas which I put to him of joint planning between the Trucial Oman Levies and the Muscat forces for dealing with emergencies in the area where Muscat and Abu Dhabi meet and of exercises to practice co-operation between the Muscat forces and the R.A.F. The opening of the Wadi Samail, to which I have referred above, and of the Wadi Howasinah route between Ibri and Khaburah, on which work is also about to be undertaken, and of a route between Ras al Hadd and the interior of Oman, which is said to be already available to motor traffic, will greatly improve the effectiveness of the Sultan's forces in maintaining control of the whole country.

4. The opening of these routes, particularly those through the Wadi Samail and Wadi Howasinah, will also have a most beneficial effect on trade. The tribes bordering on the latter route had previously shown some hostility to the idea of a motorable track since this would endanger the profits which they are accustomed to make on camel transport, but it is believed that this opposition has now been overcome. The Wadi Samail tribes on the other hand have, from the moment of the arrival of the Sultan's forces at the interior terminal of this route, shown enthusiasm for making it passable for motor traffic, and Sulaiman bin Himyar, the leader of the Ghafiri faction, who, until near the end, was one of the principal supporters of the ex-Imam, has particularly asked the Sultan whether his cars bringing agricultural produce from the Jebel Akhdhar can use this route as soon as possible for trade with Muscat. The Sultan therefore proposes to concentrate on the opening up of communications on these lines, together with other minor projects of the same type, as the first stage in economic development. The only other matter on which he considers it feasible to make early progress is the provision of doctors, of which he now proposes to make four available in the interior in addition to the one whom we are going to provide with the mobile clinic. He is now only waiting for suitable candidates to be selected by the Indian Government. The Sultan does not believe that for the next six months or so anything more than this should be attempted in the way of development. He takes this line partly, I think, because he does not wish to get committed to expenditure before he knows that he is going to have the resources derived from oil to enable him to carry it out over a long period; but even more important than this is his wish not to bring about rapid change in the way of life of the inhabitants of the interior of Oman. He is particularly keen that there should not be criticism from the more reactionary tribal and religious leaders to the effect that the reassertion of Muscat authority means the introduction of Western personnel and Western innovations of all kinds. In accordance with this policy he has told the oil company that they are not to send geologists into the recently reoccupied areas for the time being and he does not at present wish to avail himself of offers I have made to provide technical officers from B.M.E.O. or on loan from the Bahrain Government to advise on irrigation, agricultural or other schemes. He prefers to let the people absorb slowly their new relationship with the Muscat Government, the presence of Muscat forces as a guarantee of internal security, and the improved communications and health service. He believes that a pause now will also enable him to discover which particular projects are specially desired by the inhabitants of the various places and thus to draw up a development programme which will secure the maximum amount of local goodwill. The only exception which the Sultan mentioned was that his Wali at Buraimi was being authorised to continue work on the improvement of the falaj irrigation system parallel to that being undertaken in the Abu Dhabi villages. He also said that if we would let him know details of the anti-malarial measures which we intended to take in the Abu Dhabi villages he would hope to be able to take parallel measures of this kind in his villages in the Oasis.

5. On the administrative side the Sultan is also proceeding with the utmost caution. He has reappointed many of the Walis who had previously held office under the Imam's authority, in some cases instead of the new men whom the Minister of the Interior had appointed in the first days after the reoccupation and before the Sultan's arrival. He intends to leave in existence and if necessary to strengthen the Shari' system of administering justice, and far from sponsoring any relaxation of the rigid Quranic rules of behaviour current in the interior, he has introduced even stricter prohibitions than before against the practice of smoking in the town of Muscat itself, as a sign that he intends to conserve the old way of life. I was also told that one of the reasons why the Sultan had chosen his cousin Sayid Thuwainy among all other members of his family to be his representative with the

forces during the occupation of Nizwa was that Thuwainy was the only one who wore his beard unshaven and untrimmed, in accordance with the strict religious tradition as upheld in the interior.

6. The Sultan told me that he had been asked by some of the prominent citizens of Nizwa whether he would himself assume the Imamate. He had replied that he would not do so and he said to me that he regarded this office as being non-existent. The official theory is that the dignity of Imam was merged in that of Sultan when the latter title was assumed by the early members of the present dynasty and the Sultans have never recognised the existence of separate Imams, but have consistently referred to the individuals claiming to hold this office by their personal names only. (The Sultan's attitude on this point bears out the forecast in my telegram No. 926 of December 13, 1956.) The Sultan also said that there had been a little difficulty over the question of the Friday prayers at Nizwa. These are normally said only at the behest of or in honour of the recognised religious or secular authority, and had previously been said in honour of the Imam. The Sultan was told by the religious leaders in Nizwa that it would be acceptable if he now issued a decree to the effect that they were to be said in his name. He did this and the prayers were now being said accordingly. The Sultan mentioned, however—and I hope that this has no significance as a seed of trouble for the future—that there had been some opposition to this course among the younger religious experts in Nizwa. It has since been learned that two of the Qadis at Nizwa have still refused to accept the arrangement and the Qadi from Muscat has been sent to Nizwa to reassure the people and lead prayers.

7. I discussed briefly with the Sultan and rather more lengthily with his Foreign Minister, Mr. Innes, who is considerably preoccupied with the subject, the question of the training of sufficient men to carry out the administration of the State in its new form, and particularly to cope with the entirely new range of problems which will be presented if oil is discovered and development proceeds on any large scale. Education at Muscat is at present restricted both in numbers and in scope. Higher education has to be sought outside and the authorities have been discouraged by the way in which promising pupils usually leave to take up employment elsewhere and therefore are of no benefit to the State. The Sultan is also believed to be somewhat discouraged by the results of the foreign education and training received by some members of his family. (In our eyes the unsatisfactory results are largely due to this training being incomplete and unsystematic.) The Sultan is against the widespread introduction of education in the country other than on a religious basis because he realises that this would in the end result in a demand for political changes of which he would not approve. He also told me that he is strongly opposed to bringing in officials and technicians from other Arab States, except possibly Iraq, as has been done in Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. He prefers to rely on Englishmen, Pakistanis and Indian Moslems. I pointed out to Mr. Innes that, while we sympathised with a great deal of the Sultan's feelings on these subjects, it was our experience that once wealth came to a State it would be found necessary to show the people fairly quickly that they were getting some benefit from it, and it might be difficult to spend the money on suitable objects without at least a certain number of reasonably qualified administrative staff. The danger was that if these did not exist in the country they would have to be brought in from somewhere else.

8. I consider that the Sultan's general ideas on the administration of the country and on the nature and speed of development during the period immediately ahead of us are generally sound. The tribes of the interior have a long history of fanaticism, reaction and xenophobia and it is certainly wise not to subject them to too many shocks at once. The Sultan, in contrast to all the other Rulers in the Gulf, is probably of sound enough judgment and strong enough character to keep the pace of development and reform slow, even if he obtains great wealth. He may, however, be overestimating the extent to which in a slightly longer period the inhabitants of Oman will be willing to remain isolated from the currents running in the rest of the Arab world and the extent to which he could maintain this isolation against their will. One of the early results of an increase in the standard of living will unfortunately be the widespread purchase of wireless sets and this means opening the door to the insidious influence of Egyptian opinion which, apart from its hostile political tendency, may act as a solvent of age-old traditions and habits of life. It may therefore be over-optimistic to hope that, however gradually the Sultan proceeds, he can in the end escape the dilemma facing all other traditionalistic

régimes in this part of the world of either holding out too long against popular wish for change, or on the other hand, of giving in to it too soon before there is any alternative leadership with administrative experience. But this is still a long way ahead and the Sultan has more time than most of the others for real administrative and economic progress before politics interfere. If, as I hope, we continue to regard it as a British interest that there should exist a stable and friendly State of Muscat and Oman there will no doubt be opportunities for us to give appropriate help and guidance in this process. Our help will be welcome and effective on two conditions, first that we refrain from forcing the pace, secondly that on the international stage we manage so far as possible to "hold the ring" for Muscat, so that internal development can continue undisturbed by outside pressures and strains.

9. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Cairo, Beirut, Amman, Jedda, Damascus, Baghdad, Washington, United Kingdom Delegation, New York, the Political Office with the Middle East Forces, the Commander-in-Chief, East Indies Station, the Air Officer Commanding, Aden, and Gulf posts.

I have, &c.

B. A. B. BURROWS.

EA 1015/17

No. 2

SITUATION IN OMAN UP TO RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SULTAN'S AUTHORITY

Major Chauncy to Sir Bernard Burrows (Bahrain)

(Received in Foreign Office on February 6, 1956, under cover of Bahrain despatch No. 7.) (Not printed.)

(No. 2. Confidential)
Sir,

Muscat,

January 19, 1956.

I have the honour to report that upon the 24th December, 1955, the Sultan of Muscat and Oman entered Nizwa, the capital of Oman proper, which his forces had already captured on the 15th December after a brief operation in which no opposition was encountered. He proceeded straight to the Bait al Birza, where, in the Assembly Hall (Majlis) beneath a ceiling dedicated to his grandfather in 1908, he proclaimed himself Ruler of the territory. The announcement was received by the people of Nizwa with every appearance of joy, and from the fact that the Imam, Ghalib bin Ali, had been unable to rally any opposition and been forced to flee ignominiously to his village to seek refuge with his former tribal chief, and from the visits of all the leading Shaikhs to Nizwa, and later Muscat, it would seem that not only is the Sultan now acknowledged as the Ruler of Oman, but that he is universally welcomed as such. In his own capital of Muscat the news of the fall of Nizwa, and of the former capital of the country, Rostaq, which had been held by Talib, the Imam's brother, was received with unprecedented scenes of rejoicing, and by the middle of January the Sultan had received the resignation of all the Imam's Walis, and posted his own, in many cases retaining the services of the same individuals.

2. So complete is the transformation from opposition to allegiance that it may be of interest to trace how this has come about since the rebellion of 1913-19 and the signing of the Agreement of Sib in 1920, under the provisions of which the present Sultan's father by undertaking not to interfere in the internal affairs of the tribes of the interior, whose shaikhs were signatories to the Agreement, divided the Sultanate into two autonomous entities. The boundaries between the two administrations were never defined, but in general the Walis of the Sultan were posted in all the coastal towns, the tribes around which looked to the Sultan, whilst the Imam's Walis were received by the tribes of the Interior. In addition, however, at the time, the tribes of Sur and Jala'an, Dhahirah, Buraimi (or rather the Jau tract surrounding this oasis) and Mahadha regarded themselves as independent and neither the Imam nor Sultan had Walis there, nor had the Sultan much control over the Wali of Sohar who virtually ran an independent Government in that district.

3. With all but the interior, Her Majesty's Government were able to help the Sultan to gain control in the succeeding years, but it was their invariable policy not to accept any commitment inland, and the Sultan was advised in response to approaches which he made from time to time that he must achieve his purposes inland with his own resources. Thus, in respect of the Interior, the present Sultan, who, for some years previously as President of the Council of State, had developed both a keen sense of duty and a determination to gain control over the whole of his inheritance in his lifetime, realised, when he succeeded his father in 1932, that he would have to rely upon cajolery and wile rather than force to restore the authority of his dynasty, which had been achieved by his illustrious ancestor, Ahmed, when, having thrown out the Persians in 1744, he was elected Ruler (then styled Imam) in recognition of the feat.

4. To measure the Sultan's task it is necessary to recall the reasons for the opposition of the tribes to the ruling house which had developed over the years up to 1913. These reasons were four, and may briefly be summarised as:—

- (1) According to the Ibadhi tenets (to which the majority of the more influential tribes of the interior subscribe) the ruler must be elected, and the Sultans since Sultan bin Ahmed had not heeded this formality.

- (2) The personal characters of the Sultans themselves had deteriorated at an alarming rate.
- (3) The corruption of the Sultans' rule and the lack of personal touch so dear to the Arab.
- (4) Foreign interference. The pacts with the British Government, especially those directed against what they deemed their most cherished rights—the importation of arms and slaves, in which the Sultans had acquiesced without consulting them and without sharing any of the sums of money paid them for such acquiescence.

5. From the commencement of his rule, therefore, the Sultan proceeded by personal example and edict to demonstrate the absence of any cause for objection under the second and third heads. Although he is, through an unfortunate trait of shyness, apt to keep himself aloof, and disappear to his inaccessible province of Dhofar for long periods, he exercises the closest possible control in every branch of government, which to the Western mind is excessive and apt to discourage the display of initiative by his officials. Similarly to pander to the susceptibilities of the Ibadhis, the Sultan has passed strict orders regulating smoking, dress, music and the like.

6. To remove the first and the fourth objections, since he cannot go back on them, the Sultan could only endeavour to win the support of the "electors" *ex post facto* by showing them that he is in fact the only suitable candidate and that his connexion with foreign Governments and enterprise will be to their mutual advantage. Thus, in tendering advice to the Sultan, it should always be borne in mind that there may be considerations, not readily apparent to people other than himself and his tribes, preventing his acceptance of such advice, or requiring very cautious implementation of it.

7. Owing to the high character and learning of Mohammad Abdullah al Khalili, the Imam elected just before the Sib Agreement, there was, however, no likelihood of the Sultan making much headway during the former's lifetime in winning over the tribes of Oman. So the Sultan laid himself out to be the most suitable successor. He meticulously observed the provisions of the Agreement and, whilst taking care never to acknowledge the Imam by that title, he corresponded with him cordially upon every occasion and even appointed his relations to positions of Qadhis and Walis of his own. So that by 1937 when the Sultan, with the approval of the British Government, gave a concession to a British oil company for the whole of his territory, he met with overtures from the very Shaikh, Isa bin Saleh, who had been the prime mover against the régime in his father's time. Through this and the next year the Sultan steadfastly pursued his policy, aided by the addition to his means of the payments of the oil company which, unlike his predecessors, he proceeded to share to some extent with the tribal leaders in an attempt to buy their goodwill. The following year, 1939, saw the other chief supporter of the Imam, and, now, one of the few surviving signatories of the Sib Agreement, Shaikh Sulaiman bin Hamyar, inviting the Sultan's half-brother, Tarik bin Taimur, to visit him in Tanuf, which however the outbreak of World War II seems to have prevented.

8. In 1940 the tribes of the Interior appear to have formed an opinion that there was reason to fear invasion from their ancient enemies, the Persians, and the Sultan received letters from both Shaikhs Isa and Sulaiman that they would like to meet him to discuss the situation, whilst the Imam wrote to say that he would also like to send a representative. Though this meeting did not come about, its proposal, besides demonstrating the growing tendency to respect the Sultan, illustrates the manner, to be seen later, in which the people of Oman invariably close their ranks against the threat of aggression: a habit which the Sultan has been careful to bear in mind in all his dealings with the tribes, and he has never attempted to enter any place without first obtaining assurances of welcome: which, incidentally, he obtained covertly from the majority of tribal leaders before launching his final move against Nizwa.

9. In 1941 the Sultan's aspirations received a setback when, following the murder of some of the Imam's followers by men of the Beni Kalban tribe who supported the Sultan, the Imam advanced upon Ibri with a considerable force. Ibri was occupied and the Imam installed a Wali, Mohammed bin Salim al Rqaishi. The Beni Kalban appealed in vain to the Sultan who had insufficient

means to come to their aid. The Sultan's reputation suffered a further setback in 1943 through a belief that the restrictions imposed by the Muscat Government to control food supplies on account of the war, was an infringement of the Sib Agreement. However, after a visit by Shaikh Isa's son to Muscat it was established that the shortage of foodstuffs was no fault of the Sultan, and a tribal agent was retained in Muscat to purchase the wheat and barley shares for the Interior.

10. It was not until 1946 that, with the illness of the Imam, the Sultan's policy first appeared to be paying any substantial dividend. As has been stated, the Sultan never held any real hope of achieving his ambition during the lifetime of Mohammed bin Abdullah, but now with the latter's illness and expectation of his death, came a friendly letter from Shaikh Isa in which he stated that he intended to take no part in the future of the Imamate. This was followed by letters from Shaikh Sulaiman bin Hamyar and the influential Shaikh Ali bin Abdullah of the Beni bu Ali of Jala'an asking to meet the Sultan at Sur. This the Sultan did and invited them in return as his guests in Muscat. These meetings however were the cause of another frequent happening in Oman. Whilst a common threat from outside will unite even the bitterest of enemies, intense suspicion between the rival political factions, Ghafiri and Hinawi, the origin of which is another story but the existence of which has influenced internal politics for over 200 years, will often upset the best laid schemes within Oman. So in the present case the separate meetings of the rival leaders, Shaikh Isa, the Hinawi, and Shaikh Sulaiman, the Ghafiri, with the Sultan in Muscat caused tension between the two factions, each being suspicious of any move by the other which might upset the balance of power between them.

11. Whilst the Sultan realised that the mainstay of any hope of success in the Interior must be diplomacy, he was encouraged by these friendly approaches to feel that he could move faster provided he could acquire sufficient force, or show of force, to discourage opposition. To this end he approached the British Government for an indication of the support he might expect from them. He asked, in fact, for demonstrations by the Royal Air Force which he believed would enable him to assert his authority over the whole country. This was refused, owing to the criticism it was bound to arouse, and, similarly, in 1953 his request for financial assistance to raise a force of 1,500 men to subdue Oman was refused as it was considered impolitic to encourage such a venture. In his turn the Sultan felt himself unable to agree to any proposal by the British authorities to make contact with the tribes with a view to making deals with the Shaikhs to bring them to recognise his sovereignty in return for benefits to be derived from his agreements with the oil company.

12. In the meantime, in March 1947, the Imam recovered and the situation was much as before except that Shaikh Mohammed bin Isa, who had succeeded his father in 1946 died. Though Mohammed nominated his son Ahmed, the Hinawis appointed his uncle, Saleh bin Isa, instead, presumably through the intrigue of the latter, a move which eventually split the big Harth tribe and made Ahmed a staunch supporter of the Sultan, and ultimately a key personality in the abolition of the Imamate, since he possessed both brains and money conspicuously lacking in his uncle.

13. For the next four years the relations between the Imam and the Sultan remained close and cordial, though the two never met, and the country continued to enjoy the most peaceful period in its turbulent history. Shaikh Sulaiman, however, showed an increasing determination to obtain recognition of his independence and made several approaches to the British, American and Saudi Governments, and also to certain oil companies for concessions for his territory. The Sultan seemed to be resigned to the longevity of the Imam and, without the necessary degree of aid from Her Majesty's Government, to the impossibility of attempting to assert his authority over the Interior during the Imam's lifetime. He did, however, realise the importance of Buraimi as a doorway to Oman, and since it seemed impossible to achieve a deal with the Shaikhs in terms acceptable to him for Petroleum Concessions Limited to work in that area, he decided to raise a force to be stationed at Sohar of 200 men commanded by a British officer.

14. However, now unwilling to deal with the Sultan and tired of trying to achieve a deal through the British Government, or with the company direct, and encouraged by signs of renewed attempts by Ibn Saud to extend his land frontiers towards Oman, regarding which abortive negotiations had been proceeding in

1950 in Dammam and 1951 in London, certain border Shaikhs of Dhahirah and the Buraimi Oasis visited Saudi Arabia. There they received encouragement from members of the Saudi Government and the ruling family, and declaring themselves to be under Saudi protection returned to their homes with money and supplies of Saudi travel documents with which to facilitate travel for Omanis wishing to proceed to Mecca on pilgrimage and thereby popularise the Saudi régime. In Araqi, a village in Dhahirah, Said bin Rashid, chief of a small section of Baluchis established there for many years, even raised the Saudi flag. Other Shaikhs engaged in these activities at the time were Rashid bin Hamad of Hamasah, head of the Al bu Shamis settled section in the Buraimi Oasis, and Obaid bin Juma, regent Shaikh of the Beni Ka'ab tribe of the Mahadhah tract.

15. Incensed by the flying of the Saudi flag so close to his sphere of influence, the Imam sent a summons to Shaikh Said bin Rashid who at first asked the Sultan to intercede for him, but then fled to Riyadh to seek protection from Ibn Saud. Several other Shaikhs of Buraimi and Obaid of Mahadhah similarly went to Ibn Saud, and, on the 1st September, 1952, without warning, and in spite of the Agreement in London, reached, on account of the inconclusiveness of the frontier negotiations, to maintain the *status quo*, a Saudi Amir, Turki bin Ataishan, deputed by the Saudi Governor of Hasa and accompanied by some 40 armed men in motor vehicles, arrived in Hamasah by desert route through the undisputed territory of the British-protected State of Abu Dhabi. There Turki announced himself as having been sent by King Ibn Saud at the request of the people of the Buraimi Oasis, six of the nine villages of which belonged to and were occupied by the people of Shaikh Zaid the brother of the Ruler of Abu Dhabi: the remaining three, including Buraimi village itself, being claimed by the Sultan.

Thereafter Turki, through lavish entertainment and gifts, and, it must be suspected, as the result of previous planning and propaganda, succeeded in attracting all the Shaikhs of the Beni Ka'ab, Naim, al bu Shamis, and certain other petty tribes of the neighbourhood with the sole exception of Saqr bin Sultan of the Naim. This Shaikh is the hereditary chief of the Naim, and was acknowledged as Tamimah of the area, both by the tribes concerned and the Sultan, in the oil negotiations of 1948-49, in which the same shaikhs had also signified their allegiance in letters to the Sultan. His brother, Mohammed, whom he succeeded as Shaikh of Buraimi and Dhank, had been a friend of the Sultan and corresponded with the latter as his representative in both places.

17. Turki stayed in a house near the fort occupied by Shaikh Rashid bin Hamad of Hamasah. The fort, until then, had been the chief clearing house for slave traffic, sponsored by Shaikh Rashid, into Saudi Arabia, and the Sultan had had occasion to remonstrate with him and received letters of acknowledgement of his authority and a promise to desist. Over his house Turki flew the Saudi flag and proceeded to conduct himself as Governor of the place, whilst the tribal leaders, giving out that their letters previously written to the Sultan related only to oil negotiations, called upon him and, with their followers, took out Saudi nationality papers.

18. On hearing the news of this incursion, the Sultan requested Her Majesty's Government, whom he had already asked to represent him in the frontier negotiations which have been mentioned, to protest to the Saudi Government and demand the withdrawal of Turki and his men from Hamasah. The Saudi Government refused to comply, claiming Buraimi to be Ibn Saud's ancestral property. The Sultan was therefore urged by Her Majesty's Government to take suitable steps to assert his authority in the area, which in spite of being advised not to expect military assistance and before receiving assurances from the Imam, he courageously decided to do.

19. By then, however, news had reached the Imam and other tribal leaders of the Interior. All, except Shaikh Sulaiman bin Hamyar, the Ghafiri leader of Jebel Akhdar, who it was suspected, and as later events showed, hoped for recognition by the Saudis as an independent ruler and other advantages which he had unsuccessfully tried to obtain from the British Government, sent letters or came themselves to the Sultan to enquire what he proposed to do. The Imam himself wrote asking the Sultan to lead them against the aggressors. Thereupon decision was taken to collect a force of 8,000 tribesmen at Sohar, which the Sultan would lead in person in a march on Buraimi, subduing the disaffected tribes on the way. Hamasah was to be

destroyed as it was considered that Rashid bin Hamad was the principal traitor, and this village was obviously the centre of subversive activity; but the Sultan had also agreed, on Her Majesty's Government's advice, to avoid provoking a clash with Turki and to do his best to get him to withdraw peacefully. In Dhahirah the Imam was to lead to Ibri a force, whose strength was somewhat wildly proposed as 10,000, but which finally took the field under Shaikh Salih bin Isa at 500, and, having secured that area, was to wait in reserve in case it was needed at Buraimi.

20. These seemingly excessive numbers were considered necessary in order immediately to over-awe the disaffected tribes, who, it was thought, could collect possibly a thousand rifles and create considerable difficulties for the advancing forces in the narrow defiles through the Hajar mountains through which the Sultan's men would have to pass to reach Buraimi. Moreover, though it was assumed rightly or wrongly, that no Saudi reinforcements would be permitted to cross Abu Dhabi territory, which, as far as was known, was the only feasible approach from Saudi Arabia, the Sultan could not overlook the fact that he had been warned not to expect any military assistance, and once in Buraimi he would have to hold it on his own.

21. Owing to the very considerable distances from which most of the tribes had to come, it took nearly three weeks to assemble the force in Sohar. Apart from that, no difficulty in getting the men confronted the Sultan, and actually over 6,000 arrived, whilst other offers were refused. Several of the tribes came from areas under the Imam's administration. The camp and supply arrangements were made by a local firm of Hindu merchants and the Minister of the Interior, himself an old campaigner, was in overall charge, until the Sultan himself moved into camp at Sohar on October 13.

On the same day, however, Her Majesty's Consul-General received instructions to urge the Sultan not to move on Buraimi. The Saudi Government had now themselves signified their desire for the settlement of the dispute by peaceful means and for a standstill to cover the Buraimi area in the meantime, whilst, if the Sultan's march were allowed to proceed, hostilities with Saudi Arabia, which Her Majesty's Government considered it was most desirable to avoid, as much in the Sultan's as every one else's interest, were believed to be inevitable.

22. The Sultan was bitterly disappointed to relinquish his plans once he had taken the plunge and seen the reactions of his people. He had long waited for an opportunity to establish himself with the backing of the tribes, and having got it was loath to let the opportunity slip. The tribes, moreover, would not, in his view, understand any such change of purpose. However, though his vanguard was actually on the move to Buraimi through the Wadi Jizzi, he agreed to follow the advice urged upon him and returned to Muscat, dispersing his forces in the course of the next two weeks, and curtailing his new force, the Commandant of which had just arrived, to less than half the number he had contemplated.

23. From then on negotiations with the Saudis were conducted by Her Majesty's Government in the hope of securing a settlement by arbitration of the whole Saudi boundary affecting the Sultan, Trucial States and Qatar, but as no decision had been reached at the end of the year, and dissatisfied with what was happening the Sultan decided to visit England, privately, to discuss the situation with Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

24. In the meantime considerable manoeuvres by the border shaikhs in contact with Turki in Hamasah continued. However, two larger tribes at key points on the approaches from Buraimi to Dhahirah and the Batinah, the Beni Ali around Yankul and Maqabil in the Wadi Jizzi, remained loyal to the Sultan. Except for Sulaiman bin Hamyar and the Shaikh of the Janabah (said to be their Tamimah but without actual influence over the sections of the tribe towards Huqf where they look to Shaikh Khalid of the Beni bu Ali) the tribes and their leaders remained quiet, and the Imam wrote to the Sultan confirming that he was glad to hear that he and the British Government were working to settle the matter by peaceful means, and that he himself was one with the Sultan.

25. As a counterpoise to the Buraimi landslide, the Sultan decided to inform Petroleum Concessions Limited that he thought the time was ripe for their endeavouring to exploit their concession in the Huqf area, on the South-East Coast of his territory (a proposal that had hung fire for several years) provided they would agree to pay for a force of 400 men to be raised, on the lines of his new Batinah force.

to look after that area. The Muscat Infantry numbering then less than 200 was not strong enough for the purpose nor could they be spared from guard duties. By January 13, 1953, agreement had been reached with the Oil Company and Her Majesty's Government had also agreed that the arms and equipment would be available from their stocks, and that they would help in the training of the force and finding a Commandant.

26. Considerable difficulty was, however, experienced both in finding a suitable Commandant and in obtaining the recruits for the new force, and little progress was achieved to begin with.

27. Efforts were made to persuade the Sultan to allow the Company's operation to proceed with a lesser force, or with a temporary force raised from tribal and other sources, but he would not agree in the face of the risks, admittedly slight, which he believed to exist.

28. The best offer Her Majesty's Government were able to make to assist the Sultan to overcome these circumstances was to undertake to do their best to restore the situation on the beach-head should the operation meet with initial resistance. The Sultan regretted his inability to accept this as sufficient, and it was left to his officials and others in Muscat to press on with recruiting the necessary force. This, however, the Sultan agreed could now be 200 in the first beach-head phase of the operations, provided that the force would be completed to 400, or thereabouts before actual penetration of the area would be commenced. As a result of most public spirited efforts by a firm of Indian Contractors, Khimji Ramdas, who are used by Her Majesty's Consulate to obtain labour for the Royal Air Force in Masirah, more encouraging results were being achieved at the close of the year. Just on 100 men were under training and the prospects of achieving the target date became once again a possibility.

29. The Sultan, himself, left for England on February 2, 1953. There he made the request which has already been mentioned for funds to raise a force of 1,500 men to gain control over the whole country and thus, in his view, remove the temptation from the Saudis to interfere in the Interior, and, therefore, the need for their presence in Buraimi.

30. Undaunted by Her Majesty's Government's inability to sponsor the scheme to subdue the Interior by force, the Sultan, on his return to Dhofar at the end of April, busied himself with aiding the American Oil Company, which had recently taken up the concessions for Dhofar abandoned by Petroleum Concessions Limited, and, upon learning of Saudi interest in territory towards Dhofar, quickly established military posts in the frontier cases of Mugshin and Shishar, and got the American Oil Company to improve and extend a road to them. There seems little doubt that this timely action removed whatever idea the Saudis had of attempting a further *coup* in that direction, and Saudi oil prospecting parties working in that neighbourhood have not reappeared.

31. At the same time the Sultan also decided upon a fresh plan to extend his influence into the Interior from the area of interest to the British Oil Company. He was already in touch with the four tribes in the immediate vicinity, and which did not acknowledge the leadership of the Imam. The blockade of the Buraimi Oasis by the Trucial Oman Levies under the orders of Her Majesty's Government had by then begun to tell on the aid reaching pro-Saudi sympathisers in the Sultanate, and demonstrated British support for the Sultan and the Ruler of Abu Dhabi. It also encouraged those opposed to Saudi penetration.

32. Unfortunately early in January 1954 the Imam himself had again become ill, and from advancing age, blindness and general senility was incapable of decision, and totally under the influence of Shaikh Sulaiman. The latter, assisted by considerable financial help from Ibn Saud in maintaining a standing force of some 250 armed men, and hoping perhaps to become the recognised independent Ruler of Oman, succeeded in obtaining letters from the Imam and sending a deputation to Riyadh and to Cairo to invite the sympathy of the Saudi Arabian and Egyptian Governments and their recognition of the independence of Oman. At the same time Shaikh Sulaiman turned out the Imam's Wali at Ibri, substituting a man under his own influence, and embarked upon a journey to Mahot and Masirah to enlist the support of the tribes of those places ostensibly for the Imam. This he did almost certainly as a result of learning of the impending "oil" operations at Huqf—hitherto secret—from the local American Mission Doctor who visited the Imam

during his illness the previous year at Sulaiman's invitation. The landing, by then decided to be at Duqqam, further south than the Wadi Huqf, from which the expedition took its name, was planned for a few days later (February 15), and the Shaikhs, who had, as stated, already been approached by the Sultan's emissaries and visited him in Dhofar, and possibly helped by the timely visit of a Royal Navy's Frigate to that area, remained staunch, and Sulaiman retired discomfited, his return being rendered even more ignominious through the lorry in which he travelled running out of petrol. Whether or not the American Doctor concerned was in fact making a last minute effort to rally the tribes to resist the Sultan and turn to the Saudis in the hope that the latter would succeed in securing an oil concession for the Interior for the American Company operating in Saudi Arabia will perhaps never be known. But there can be no doubt that all through the frontier negotiations and subsequent events the American Government have shown signs of considerable bias towards the Saudi claims, and this has been reflected if not in the actions, by the conversations of Americans visiting and residing in Muscat.

33. Hearing from Shaikh Sulaiman that his excursion had been on behalf of the Imam, supported by their own Hinawi Tamimah, Salih bin Isa, the Wahibah tribe, through whose territory Sulaiman had passed, immediately protested to the Imam against the visit and appointed the nephew of Salih, Shaikh Ahmed, who as mentioned already was nominated by his father, as their tribal Tamimah in Salih's place. At the same time they also appear to have written to the Sultan objecting to the Oil Company entering their territory without their permission, a detail which the Sultan seems to have overlooked, presumably owing to some doubt as to the precise habitat of the Wahibah. It later transpired that Duqqam was actually part of their ancestral tribal territory, but had come to be occupied by the Jenabah. Hence the Wahibah felt that they had a right to share in the tribal guards to be supplied to protect the Company, a claim which the Sultan refused to meet until much later, when he directed his Minister of the Interior to satisfy it with money payments instead, and thereby saved, just in time, this tribe seeking Saudi assistance.

34. Thus, when, in the middle of March, the Sultan visited the beach-head at Duqqam, he curtailed the Company's area which they could then survey to include only coastal Jenabah territory and the Jiddat Harasis up to the border of the Dhofar Province.

35. In the meantime the Company's operation progressed. The Muscat and Oman Field Force, as it was styled, by then 411 strong, were moved by lorry from Sohar to Muscat and thence to Duqqam by the Company's landing craft, *Jamila* and *Jasura*. From Aden a landing craft supplied by the Admiralty, similarly brought all the transport and stores for the survey party to the beach-head.

36. By March 10 the beach-head had been established and camps had been laid and considerable preliminary surveys within the area allocated had been undertaken. Unfortunately these preliminary surveys had revealed that practically all the coastal region was lacking in oil interest, so that when Her Majesty's Consul-General arrived from Muscat on March 12 in H.M.S. *Flamingo*, and the Sultan on March 16, it had to be explained to the latter that the Company would wish to see much more of his territory before they could justify any drilling. The Sultan, who had arrived keyed up to see drilling almost in progress, was bitterly disappointed and did not seek to disguise it. He was also depressed by what he saw of the Field Force, and, probably, by the news he had then received of the Wahibah's reactions. He returned in *Flamingo* to Salalah in poor spirits, though he agreed to visit again by land route in a month or so's time. On top of this the Commandant, who was dissatisfied with conditions generally, and his own terms in particular, had expressed his wish to leave at the end of six months. The Sultan accordingly asked Her Majesty's Government to find him a replacement.

37. Towards the middle of April the Sultan decided to make the attempt to visit Duqqam by land route. The Company sent a party to the Dhofar border to await him and guide him on, whilst it was also hoped that he would be able to define on the ground the precise location of the provincial boundary which separated the Company's concession area from that of Cities Service working in Dhofar. However, after about seventy miles, some of the Sultan's vehicles broke down, and it was found that the party had underestimated their requirements for water. The heat was intense and the Sultan decided to return to Salalah.

38. In view of the Surveyor's reports and the limits set to the area in which they could venture pending invitations from the tribes, primarily the Duru, whose habitat covered almost all the most likely territory, the Company decided to reduce their personnel at Duqqam, and to await the cooler autumn weather. By that time it was hoped that the Duru would have come in. As the Field Force was far from ready to undertake any serious operations in the interior, where opposition might be encountered, the opportunity was taken to reorganise, obtain more officers and generally improve and train up their men.

39. In the meantime in Muscat, the Minister of the Interior had been active in trying to induce the Duru Shaikhs to come in. In this he was assisted by the intrigues of Sulaiman bin Hamyar to get Ibri, the capital of Dhahirah Province, under his control. He had, as mentioned already, turned out the Imam's Wali, at the request of the Ya'aqib Shaikhs of that place. With Sulaiman's growing influence, however, the Shaikhs had come to regret their action, and, since the Imam could not help them they appealed to the Sultan to take over their fort. This the Sultan declined as he did not feel able to sustain his position there at that time. The Minister of the Interior, however, seized the opportunity to invite the Shaikhs of Ibri to Muscat. These included the Duru who, though not owning Ibri themselves, had property and marketing interests there. When eventually they came to Muscat, the Minister put to the Duru the proposal that the Oil Company should enter their country provided that they would write to the Sultan owning their allegiance to him and asking him to send the Company. This they did in the beginning of August and then returned to their homes for the Id ul Ahda, and, as they said, to prepare their people. Obviously their ready co-operation was secured through their recognition of the fact that the operation would help their aspirations in Ibri, and they had included in their letter to the Sultan a condition of protection from the Imam. In doing this they proved more far-sighted than the Sultan's Minister, who discounted its significance.

40. Before this, however, the long expected death of the Imam, Mohammed bin Abdullah al Khalili, occurred after a brief fever on or about May 2, 1954.

41. Contrary to expectation, but probably due to the action which the Imam had taken to nominate a deputy after his illness the preceding year, the election of his successor took place quickly and quietly, and on May 7 the Muscat Government and this Consulate received letters from Shaikh Ghalib bin Ali, another Hinawi, to the effect that he had been elected Imam. The new Imam seems to have been supported at once by both Sulaiman bin Hamyar and Salih bin Isa, the Ghafiri and Hinawi Tamimahs, and to have had sufficient following to be able to carry out a tour of accession and obtain the recognition of most of the neighbouring tribes.

42. Aided and abetted by action from the Minister of the Interior a few tribes, however, refused recognition notably the Wahibah and Beni bu Hassan of Jala'an, to whose leaders the Minister had sent sizeable presents.

43. In a letter to this Consulate announcing his election the new Imam included a reminder of his predecessor's letter of protest at the "British Government's" landing at Duqqam which the latter had written to Her Majesty's Consul General shortly before he died, and to which a brief reply had been sent to the effect that the operation was by an Oil Company with the approval of the Sultan, and was likely to be of great benefit to the people. No answer was sent to the new Imam's letter except a brief acknowledgement of its having been received and forwarded to higher authority, and, of course, an expression of regret at the news of Mohammed al Khalili's death. It was known that simultaneously the Imam had sent his brother Talib to Saudi Arabia, and it was calculated that with no encouragement from Her Majesty's Government, and inability on the part of the Saudis to intervene effectively, even should they wish, the Imam and his supporters would eventually feel compelled to recognise the Sultan, or lose all chance of taking their places in the future prosperity of the country following a discovery of oil.

44. In late September, in defiance of threats from the Imam, the Duru Shaikhs returned to Muscat and declared their readiness to take the Company to any part of their territory. The Sultan therefore lifted his ban on further penetration and authorised the Company's geologists to visit any part of Duru territory with these Shaikhs and escorts of the Field Force, provided, however, that they did not enter any villages.

45. About the same time as the geologists had thus reached Jebal Fahud in the middle of October, the Imam had decided to strike at the Duru by an attack on Ibri, the capture of which would, as already indicated, deny them their chief marketing centre. He had also, according to the Duru, threatened to destroy their habitations around Tana'am, whence their Tamimah, Ali bin Hilal himself hailed.

46. Subjected, therefore, to great pressure from the Duru, in fact a threat to go over to the Imam, the Commandant of the Field Force took his troops up to Tana'am, and thence to the outskirts of Ibri. He arrived there shortly after the place had already fallen to the Imam, who had attacked it and obtained its surrender following a brief fight and a few casualties. As the only water was about half a mile to the north of Ibri, the Field Force had to camp there. Convinced by the presence of Britishers with the Force, and, possibly the earlier evidence afforded by the visits of Her Majesty's Ships, that Her Majesty's Government were behind the Sultan, the Imam's victorious garrison immediately capitulated and the Commandant found himself inundated with offers of surrender and allegiance to the Sultan from all the Shaikhs and tribes in the vicinity. Upon hearing the news the Sultan was extremely upset, as he had not wished to bring himself into open opposition to the Imam at this stage. He felt that the Commandant had inexcusably exceeded his instructions, and protested accordingly to the Political Resident. To remove these misunderstandings and in order to co-ordinate future plans and movements, His Excellency the Political Resident visited the Sultan in Salalah. As the situation cleared, however, it was seen that far from Ibri being the embarrassment to the Sultan that he had feared, the Sultan had reason to congratulate the Commandant on his action, although, as he pointed out, it was probably more by good luck than by good management that his appearance at Ibri had not forestalled the Imam's attack, which no doubt the Duru had intended that it should, and that, as a result, the Sultan's position was politically unassailable both locally and abroad. The incident had, in fact, run to rule. That is to say the Imam's attack on Ibri had been taken as an act of aggression, and all the sympathy of the tribes was with the Sultan for coming to the rescue. Had the Sultan's capture, or even acceptance, of Ibri preceded the Imam's attack, exactly the reverse would almost certainly have been the case; and once again this very important lesson in Omani tribal reactions has been demonstrated.

47. With so much success, so easily achieved, a continuance of the march of the Field Force to Dhank and thence to link up with the Trucial Oman Levies and the Sultan's forces near Mahadhah and Sohar presented an attractive picture. But although Shaikh Saqr of the Naim in Buraimi had, on hearing the news from Ibri, lowered the Saudi flag which he had been flying since the withdrawal of the Sultan's askars and Trucial Oman Levies on conclusion of the arbitration agreement, he did not join the other Shaikhs in inviting the Sultan to Dhank, where he owned the key fort to the neighbourhood. Following, therefore, the rule mentioned above, and, possibly, as a result of a note of caution sounded by Her Majesty's Government that he should not count upon the intervention of British Forces if he got into difficulties, the Sultan decided, in spite of the insignificance of the probable resistance, to consolidate his position at Ibri.

48. From a point of view of the Company's oil exploration this decision could scarcely be regarded as disappointing, though they had latterly intimated that they would now like to see the country to the north and west of Ibri. All and more than the territory which they had included in their agreement with the Sultan the previous year was now open to their exploration, whilst their main target of Jebal Fahud had come up to their expectations. By the close of the year the Company had decided to drill at Fahud, and plans were being drawn up to proceed with this in 1955 and 1956.

49. For the Sultan, the picture, though not complete, was distinctly rosy. To the north he had the Beni Ka'ab of Mahadha under Abdullah Salim in touch with his Wali at Sohar through the Wadi Jizzi, which had been opened by the Muscat Government at the suggestion of His Excellency the Political Resident and with the help of the Trucial Oman Levies. In the Dhahirah all around Ibri and as far north as Aflaj Bani Qitab and Lower Dhank all the tribes had acknowledged him since the fall of Ibri, leaving only the Naim and al bu Shamis from there to Buraimi still estranged. From Ibri to Duqqam, the Duru, coastal Jenabah and Wahibah enclosed Sulaiman bin Hamyar and the Imam and the tribes supporting them who by now would not agree to find a force to oppose the Company. Salih

bin Isa had been to see the Sultan, and sought to regain his favour, whilst reports that the Imam and Sulaiman bin Hamyar were now considering how they too could restore their relationship with the Sultan were growing stronger. Even the Saudis appear to have been able to afford but cold comfort to the Imam's emissaries and could only advocate that they should seek recognition as an independent State with the Arab League in Cairo, where they proceeded to inspire a campaign in the local Press, and solicit the sympathy of the Egyptian Government.

50. Whilst the activities to launch the Oil Company into the east of the Sultanate and strengthening of the Sultan's forces were being pursued, Her Majesty's Government were engaged with the Saudis in drawing up an Agreement acceptable to all parties for proceeding with the arbitration of the frontier, or "Buraimi" dispute as it was generally known. The Sultan, convinced of the Saudis' bad faith, naturally put up every kind of objection to any proposal which looked like a concession to the Saudis. He was convinced that their primary aim apart from the claim to Buraimi was to suborn the whole of the interior towards a clamour for independence if not actual suzerainty under Saudi Arabia, and that the arbitration proceedings would merely be misused to gain time and as a screen behind which they could work. However, by the end of July 1954, the Sultan had been finally persuaded to accept the agreement, and thereafter he made no difficulties over carrying out his part, involving mainly the withdrawal of his tribal askars from Buraimi village, upon which the one remaining Naim Shaikh, Saqr, who had not defected, promptly went over to the Saudis, bribed by the Police Officer, Abdulla Nami, who had been sent to take charge of the Saudi Police detachment designed, under the Agreement, to maintain law and order in co-operation with a similar detachment from Her Majesty's Government. Though expressly forbidden by the Agreement from taking any part in politics or any action likely to influence arbitration proceedings, the Police Officer soon demonstrated that his role was no other than that followed by Turki, whose efforts to seduce and intimidate the tribes he appears even to have excelled, and carried right into the heart of Oman, by means of agents (including an Egyptian Ibadhi of some influence), and copious letters and presents of money supplied from Riyadh.

51. On the other hand, with the return of the Sultan from Dhofar in February 1955, after a two years' absence, and until his departure at the end of April, the capital witnessed the influx of a large number of tribal leaders to pay their respects and, incidentally, to collect the presents customary on such visits, a custom which is, besides his habit of shyness, largely responsible for the Sultan's protracted sojourns in Dhofar. These personages are known to have been well satisfied with the treatment accorded to them on this occasion. In the course of these visits the Sultan was able to effect a satisfactory settlement of the difference between himself and the Yal Wahibah over the question of the oil prospecting north of Duggam near their territory. The Sultan also received calls from some Shaikhs of the Trucial Coast, including the Shaikh of Fujairah and, in particular, Shaikh Zaid of Abu Dhabi, whom he complimented on the fine stand he had been making and help he had rendered in most difficult circumstances.

52. Shortly after his return to Salalah, the Sultan again left on July 2 by sea for England, whence he returned on August 10 by air after calls at Baghdad and Bahrain. The Sultan was well pleased with his reception in London, which included luncheon with Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. He was also delighted with his reception in Baghdad and Bahrain, and seems likely to have lost some of his aversion to public appearances and to air travel in the process. The effect of these visits, as doubtless the Sultan also guessed, was not lost on the Interior.

53. The work of building up the Sultan's armed forces continued through the year. Although for various reasons recruiting was delayed, a new training camp was set up near Ghobra, some 20 miles from Muscat, and the numbers in training there were just over 100 by the end of the year. A small force was also recruited and trained in the neighbourhood of Salalah for service in Dhofar, and the Sohar, or Batinah force was slightly increased. All the forces were strengthened by quantities of supplies, in particular transport, from the United Kingdom through the War Office and civil sources, all paid for by the Iraq Petroleum Company as an advance against future profits. This made for greater mobility and fire-power thereby permitting participation of the Field Force in the Buraimi operation and, of course, the carrying out of the decisive action against the Imam.

54. The occupation of Ibri and its vicinity in the latter part of the preceding year gave rise from time to time to a number of defections from the Imam's or Saudi side to that of the Sultan. Of these the most notable occurred in June when Mohammed Salamin, paramount chief of the nomadic section of the Al bu Shamis tribe, came to Muscat with several other Shaikhs of the same tribe to ask for the establishment of a post in his territory at Sunaina. This was acceded to, another post being later set up at Qabil. These posts are valuable marks in the delimitation of the Sultan's land frontier.

55. Sulaiman bin Hamyar arrived in Muscat on July 13 for the first time in seven years. He came ostensibly to mediate between the Sultan and Imam and left promising that he would do his best to prevent trouble in the interior. In this he may have been as good as his word, for he was reported to have counselled the Imam and Salih bin Isa against raising a regular army, for which two Egyptians were said to have been "imported" as instructors. Certainly there were no signs of any such forces when the Sultan's troops entered Nizwa or Rostaq.

56. Reports of Saudi gun-running to Central Oman were current for most of the year and led to a tightening up of security measures at frontier posts and a regular search of vehicles and caravans proceeding to the interior. In June a large quantity of arms and ammunition was stated to have been discharged from a Saudi armed launch in the vicinity of Sib and subsequently smuggled to Khodh destined for the interior. An armed demonstration before Khodh led to the surrender to the Muscat authorities of some 400 old British-made B.S.A. and Lee-Enfield rifles dated 1899 to 1909, in mostly unusable condition, by the Shaikh of Khodh, through the mediation of the Sultan's Wali of Boshar, a relative of the former "Imam" Mohammed bin Abdullah el Khalili. Nevertheless the opinion prevails that the surrendered arms were but a small proportion of the total. Previously several bags of ammunition dated 1914 to 1916 had been seized by the Muscat authorities at Sib. This ammunition which was mixed with dates was, like the rifles, old and in poor condition, and both rifles and ammunition are probably those which have been circulating in the Gulf for years to wherever the demand might be. There are old files in this Consulate describing identical consignments and methods of smuggling in the 1930's well into the 1940's. The markings of rifles found in Nizwa and Rostaq indicated that they might even be the same second-hand rifles supplied by the former Government of India in 1923 to the Persian Government for use in Baluchistan, and possibly later disposed of as obsolete. There is, however, from captured correspondence, no doubt that the Saudi Government were also proposing to supply revolvers, machine guns, and rifles to Ghalib and his followers but it is thought that these would have been of a better quality, and that few, if any, got in.

57. Following indisputable evidence that Saudi Arabia was keeping neither to the letter nor to the spirit of the Buraimi Arbitration Agreement, this was denounced by Her Majesty's Government acting with the consent and on behalf of the Sultan and Shaikh of Abu Dhabi. The Buraimi oasis was reoccupied on October 26 by Trucial Oman Levies in conjunction with forces of the Sultanate. A few days later Dhank, about half-way between Ibri and Buraimi was occupied by Sultanate askars.

58. As a result of the Buraimi operation, quantities of further written evidence of Saudi duplicity were discovered. The documents seized likewise put beyond doubt Saudi efforts to suborn subjects of the Sultan and also to aid the Imam of Oman to obtain complete independence from the Sultan. The facts revealed by these documents had long been known to everyone on the spot and on his return to Dhofar from his visit to England, the Sultan decided that action to put a stop to these activities, on the lines he had long advocated, by securing control of the interior and to remove the Imam and his fellow conspirators was now imperative, and, this time, Her Majesty's Government supported his views.

59. Accordingly preparations were made to move upon the Imam's capital of Nizwa on December 15. Shaikh Ahmed bin Mohammed was instructed by message on the 13th dropped by an aircraft on his house at Qabil in Sharkiyah to proceed at once with 300 armed followers on camels to Nizwa to act there as the Sultan's representative. Other Shaikhs who had supported the former Imam but had never willingly accepted Ghalib were called in and later accompanied the Sultan's forces to Nizwa. Throughout the country the Sultan carefully prepared the way and ascertained that his advent to get rid of Ghalib, would be popular. It seems that besides disapproving of the attempts to secure foreign intervention, many

of the Shaikhs had grown to dislike Ghalib for his manner and for his meanness over the distribution of money received from the Saudis. Moreover, the presence of British officers in the Sultan's forces, and the Saudis' propaganda that it was the British who were planning an attack upon them, all helped to determine the people not to support Ghalib.

60. Her Majesty's Government, having agreed that the Sultan's decision was wise and timely, and in view of their long-standing friendship, granted him a small measure of support in the shape of air transport and some technical personnel, for which he asked, and were prepared to consider further help if necessary.

61. In accordance with the plans, which incidentally, the Sultan had drawn up himself, two squadrons of the Muscat and Oman Field Force approached Nizwa on the night of December 14 and occupied it the following day; only one shot from an outpost was encountered. There were no casualties on either side and the Sultan's political planning of this *coup* had clearly been most successful. But the Imam himself, who had vainly tried to rally his followers, absconded climbing down from his fort by a rope under cover of darkness, on the night of December 14 as soon as the Muscat and Oman Field Force was observed to move to its final positions. He was later stated to have resigned the "Imamate" in disgust, and to have withdrawn to his native village of Sait, where he was discovered by his fellow tribesmen and taken to a house in Ghafat belonging to the head Shaikh with whom he sought sanctuary. Meantime his brother Talib was reported to be holding out at Rostaq against a diversionary move made by a section of the Batinah force. This force later occupied Rostaq after the Beni Ghafir tribe, friendly to the Sultan and hostile to the Beni Hinah, had invested it, only to find that Talib had fled.

62. Sulaiman bin Hamyar waited upon the Sultan in Nizwa and was persuaded to return to his home upon a pledge of good behaviour. Saleh bin Isa went to Salalah where he waited 10 days presumably to submit to the Sultan. He is now believed to have returned to Sur and may have gone to Bahrain or even Saudi Arabia or Egypt. He has no following left and the Sultan is not disposed to deal with him.

63. Following the collapse of the Imam's régime, messages of allegiance, many coupled with expressions of rejoicing, were received in Muscat and Nizwa from every quarter. It soon became evident that the tribes as a whole had never taken to the new Imam and that, but for the three individuals, Sulaiman bin Hamyar, Salih bin Isa, Talib, and their few followers, everyone was opposed to inviting the interference of their former Wahabi aggressors, and the late Imam, before he died, had, at the time of Turki's appearance in Buraimi in 1952, indeed voiced the sentiments of the whole country when he asked the Sultan to lead them to drive the Saudis out.

64. Thus the end of the year 1955 saw the entire area of the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman once again united and the Sultan's ambition fulfilled. His journey by road from Salalah, in itself a remarkable pioneering effort, was designed to show that he could reach the interior in four days from Salalah or Muscat and to demonstrate that his residing in either place did not in fact place him out of touch with his people.

65. For the present the Sultan has decided to create as little change as possible until the people have had time to adjust themselves, to what has happened. He is as determined as ever not to risk antagonising the more orthodox and stately leaders by introducing any startling changes or vigorous measures with which his predecessors had antagonised them. On the contrary he proposes to wait for the people themselves to say what they want. Already in answer to their requests he has arranged for more doctors, and for the route up the Wadi Samail from Sib to Nizwa to be cleared and opened to motor traffic. He has reinstated most of the late Imam's Walis, and in particular he has placed the former Wali of Ibri, Mohammed bin Salim al Ragaishi, whom Shaikh Sulaiman deposed, to be Wali of Izki, having already his own Wali at Ibri.

66. Until oil is found, however, the chief problem of this territory must remain one of finance. Notwithstanding the increase of the ground rent to 10 lakhs of rupees recently agreed to by the Iraq Petroleum Company Limited (Petroleum Development-Oman-Limited as its subsidiary in this country is called), which bring the Sultanate revenue from all sources to some 50 lakhs, little remains for the carrying out of reforms in the realms of social welfare, communications and

agriculture after administrative and military charges have been met, in spite of the continuance of the oil company to pay for the whole of the Field Force. With ever-increasing costs of material and wages the Sultan cannot but continue to husband his resources and may be sparing over expenditure upon non-profit-making enterprises such as roads, education and health, whilst the flight of labour to other oil areas has rendered it very difficult to undertake any widespread agricultural development.

67. Though the country is now united under one Ruler, and in spite of his demonstrations of orthodoxy, the Sultan has disclaimed any pretensions to the office of Imam or spiritual leader. He has never recognised the title and would not accept it. In the meantime the Ibadhis have ceased their public prayers, known as the Friday Prayers, as they maintain that they cannot be held in the absence of an Imam. The Sultan is accordingly sending the Chief Qadhi from Muscat to Nizwa to persuade the people of the fallacy of this view and hopes that this will be accepted.

68. The calls of Her Majesty's Consul-General on the Sultan at Nizwa and of his Excellency the Political Resident's at Muscat on December 24 and January 11 respectively, when many of the Shaikhs were present, have also had their effect in showing the approval and recognition of Her Majesty's Government, as is, of course, fitting since the Agreement of Sib was arrived at through their mediation.

69. In casting back over the last and most eventful years I am impressed with the detailed knowledge of his country and amazing sense of judgment and timing which the Sultan has shown and his courage in adversity and the resilience and staying power which have enabled him to achieve this personal triumph. Never once has he failed to understand our difficulties in agreeing to his proposals or in limiting the assistance which we have been able to offer, nor resented advice which has sometimes been unpalatable. On the contrary he has always appreciated frankness between friends, been grateful for whatever assistance he has received, which he recognises has over the years been very substantial, and done his best to find acceptable alternatives to obtain his objectives. Being now very experienced his views are always sound, and even if they do not sometimes accord with our own, they are invariably worth consulting. He can, as has been shown in this narrative, act very quickly and resolutely in case of need and any procrastination is usually only encountered when he is in fact testing a proposal or staving off something in which he genuinely has no faith. His success may fairly be said to have been due to his having studied and removed *mutatis mutandis* the reasons for his predecessor's failures. His greatest handicaps have been the lack of local material even among his relatives from which to train officials and the certainty of criticism and opposition if he is seen to place the administration too much in the hands of foreigners.

70. I attach a copy of a note compiled about four years ago which gives details of the Imam's administration at the time, and a brief account⁽¹⁾ of the internal history and politics of the Sultanate up to the Agreement of Sib, in case these may be of help filling in the background of the main account.

I have, &c.

F. C. L. CHAUNCY.

Enclosure

A NOTE ON THE IMAM'S ADMINISTRATION IN THE INTERIOR OF OMAN

The rules for the appointment of Imam are as follows:—

1. He is elected by the Mullas and Tribal Leaders.
2. He must be a man of good bearing and reputation, of a pious disposition and well versed in religious matters.
3. He should not be from a large tribe which is able to exercise its influence beyond its own tribal borders.
4. He is elected only after the decease of his predecessor.

⁽¹⁾ Not printed.

Shaikhs

There is no special election of Shaikhs, and tribal leadership usually falls to the son or brother or other nearest male relative, depending to some extent upon acceptance by the tribe as a whole.

Extent of the Administration

The Imam's influence extends over the territories of the tribes which support him. Broadly defined this is from the southern border of Dhahirah province, in the north-west of the Sultanate, along the mountainous ridge of Western and Eastern Hajar almost to the coast in Sharqiyah and Jala'an, bounded on the South by the Rub el Khali desert and on the North by the territories of the tribes which support the Sultan.

The capital and residence of the Imam is Nizwa.

The tribes at present supporting the Imam are:—

Al Awamir.	Beni Mahariq.
Beni Ghafir.	el Masakrah.
Beni Habus.	el Masharifah.
el Hadadabah.	Beni Nabhan.
Beni Hadrami.	el Nadabiyah.
Beni Hajriyin.	Rahbiyin.
Beni Harras.	Beni Ruwahah.
el Harth.	Beni Shakail.
Beni bu Hassan.	el Siyabiyin.
Beni Hinah.	Yal Wahibah.
el Ibriyin.	el Ya'aqib.
Beni Jabir.	el Ya'aribah.
Beni Kharus.	el Yaman.
el Kimud.	Beni Riyam (if not regarded as independent by their leader).
el Ma'awal.	

Further particulars regarding these tribes will be found in the "Notes on the Tribes of the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman."

The Administration**(a) Officials**

All are appointed by the Imam.

(i) *The Qadhis* (Judges). If the Imam has a good knowledge of the Shara Law, as in the present case, he is himself the Chief Qadhi. Other Qadhis are appointed in accordance with their influence and knowledge in the various cities and villages in which Walis are appointed. Appeals are heard by the Chief Qadhi. A Qadhi's salary varies from 30 to 70 rials a month, plus a supply of dates for his winter use.

(ii) *The Walis* (Governors) are men of influence, but, except in some cases where the office is given as a remuneration to the tribal leader, they are not the leading Shaikhs, and are normally not posted in territories in which they have a tribal connexion. Their duties are to defend the territory, supervise the officials and administration generally and to ensure that the Shara law and the orders of the Courts are obeyed. Their residence is usually a fort, and they are supplied with askars (armed village police or levies) to assist them.

A list of the present Walis' posts is attached. Their salaries vary from 50 to 200 rials a month, or the revenue of the district.

(iii) *Clerks and other petty officials* are as under:—

Collectors of Zakat, salary approximately 15 rials per month.

Clerks of the Qadhis, salary approximately 7 to 15 rials per month.

Clerks to the markets (with small powers to settle disputes on the spot), salary approximately 10 rials per month.

Market police (to assist the clerks), salary approximately 7 to 10 rials per month.

Teachers, salary approximately 10 rials per month.

(b) Currency

The rial is the Maria Theresa silver dollar, and though reproduced from time to time by private firms always bears the date of 1780. This is the only acceptable coin in the Interior, although it is supplemented by some copper coins called baizas counting 100 to the dollar in denominations of 5, 10 and 20. The dollar, being made of pure silver, fluctuates in value with the price of silver and also with the demand for it during the date season. Its average value is about 3s. 6d. sterling.

(c) Revenue

Several properties belong to the "State," and the income goes to the department known as the "Bait el Mal," and is intended for the upkeep of the official administration.

In addition the following taxes are levied:—

Zakat.—A tax on crops, sheep, camels, cattle and the manufacture of ornaments.

Market Tax.—A simple tax on all sales in the market. There are also

Endowments mostly to finance small schools, wells or other charities by persons in their wills.

These revenues and taxes are collected by the officials appointed by the Imam and are intended to go to the central Treasury. There are however many defalcations and refusals to pay, and the Imam has made several fruitless attempts to appoint a Revenue Inspector to check the accounts of the Walis and other officials, but no one is willing to take the post, or if he takes it, is able to deal with the more influential people.

Fortunately the Imam is himself possessed of considerable properties from which he derives adequate revenues, and many of the Walis are expected to carry on their administration and remunerate themselves and their officials from the revenues to be collected in their districts.

(d) Security, Law and Order, Arms and Equipment

Shara law governs everything, and all offences and disputes arising out of transactions of any nature are settled by the Qadhis in accordance with it. Besides the Koran there are several works in Arabic dealing with the law, and the Qadhis and people generally have a good knowledge of it, and it is seldom abused.

Nearly every tribesman of the Interior possesses and can handle arms of some sort. They are quick to unite to resist aggression or interference in their affairs. They resent and are highly suspicious of intrusion by foreigners and can be expected to offer opposition to any attempt to exploit the natural resources of their country, as they believe that this will result only in the lessening of their independence and little material benefit, financial or otherwise, to themselves. However many have been driven by poverty in recent years to seek employment in the oilfields and this attitude is changing.

The Imam maintains no standing army, but employs about 2,000 Askars posted as village police and garrisons of the forts throughout his territory to assist the Walis and Qadhis in their duties and for their protection, and, of course, his own.

The pay of an Askari is about 4 rials a month, and that of a Head Askari about 10 rials. "Hinawi" Askars must serve in Hinawi territory and "Ghafaris" in Ghafari territory.

A fairly plentiful supply of old-fashioned rifles exists (ranging from muzzle loaders to single breech-loading 0.450 Martini Henrys), whilst a few tribesmen seem to have acquired some quite modern weapons (0.303 magazine Lee Enfields). Those that cannot obtain fresh ammunition, make their own cartridges from fired cases, scrap and a locally-made powder. With the suppression of the former traffic in arms and ammunition, the Sultan, who can import his requirements from the United Kingdom, has a considerable inducement to offer those who might otherwise not wish to seek his favour. Some of the old cannon in the forts may be capable of use. Swords and daggers complete their armament.

(e) Medical

There is no provision for medicine, midwifery, &c. The nearest hospitals or medical aid are in Muscat, Matrah and Dubai. The American Mission doctor at Matrah is sometimes invited to visit the Interior.

(f) Education

The only schools are those maintained in Mosques by the Mullahs for imparting the teachings of the Koran to children, and small buildings in gardens maintained from charitable endowments which teach Arabic grammar and the Shara law, in addition. The teachers are paid from these funds.

(g) General

The Imam makes no attempt to issue passports for foreign travel, and all Omanis, except or or two recalcitrants such as Sulaiman bin Hamyar of the Jebal Akhdar region, who is trying for complete independence, obtain Omani passports signed by the Sultan.

The Sultanate and Imam's Courts appear to find no difficulty in working in co-operation in such matters as the administration and disposal of the estates of deceased persons, and joint action is sometimes taken in matters of public security and mutual defence.

The present Sultan was also in much closer touch with the previous Imam over their foreign relations than many people may think, although latterly the Imam had been sounding representatives of Her Majesty's Government to see if his passports would be recognised. The Sultan also appeared to have complete confidence in his interpretation of the feelings of the Shaikhs, of the Interior, many of whom regularly visit him, and the Imam's support in his dealings with foreign interests. Such dealings the Imam seemed content to leave to the Sultan, whilst the latter made no attempt to interfere with the former. In other words they both seemed to be implementing the Treaty of Sib of 1920, perhaps even more in the spirit than in the letter, and the tribes, themselves, enjoyed a period of peace since that date, unrivalled in their history. It remains to be seen whether the new Imam, Ghalib bin Ali, will be content to follow his predecessors example in this respect, or whether he will succeed in obtaining sufficient support to secure the complete independence which at present he is believed personally to desire.

Places at which the Imam posts Walis

Adam.	Bidiyah.	Nizwa.
Al Hamra.	Ibra.	Ibri.
Al Ma'awil.	Izki.	Ristaq.
Al Mudhaibi.	Ja'alan.	Samail.
Al Mudhairub.	Jebal al Akhdhar.	Samad.
Bahla.	Manah.	Wadi Bani Kharus.
Bidbid.	Nakhal.	

EA 1016/48

No. 3

INTERNAL SITUATION IN BAHRAIN

Sir Bernard Burrows to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received April 3)

(No. 25. Confidential)

Bahrain,

Sir,

March 26, 1956.

I have the honour to transmit herewith copies of two despatches from the Political Agent at Bahrain describing recent developments in the internal situation. Mr. Gault sets out the sequence of events clearly and I agree generally with his comments and conclusions. The issues of policy involved are being dealt with in separate telegraphic correspondence and there would be needless duplication if I were to go into them fully in the present despatch. I will therefore only add one or two general comments which may add to understanding of the situation and of the questions with which we are likely to be faced.

2. Enough has already been said about the shortcomings of the Ruler in exerting his political influence in a situation that is both new and repugnant to him and of the very natural difficulty shown by Sir Charles Belgrave in adapting himself to political developments arising only in part from the natural evolution of a politically conscious class in Bahrain, but to a larger extent from the political spirit of the times which is prevalent in the rest of the Middle East and which, with newly improved communications, is spilling over even into this once remote island. But in addition to these weaknesses on the Government side there is a particularly disappointing feature in the lack of public spirit and moral courage shown by the more experienced elements of the population outside the ruling family. There are quite a number of merchants who have made considerable fortunes in exploiting the commercial advantages of Bahrain, who have had reasonably good education and have travelled widely in the outside world. It could have been expected that these people would feel that it was in their interest if not their duty to do all they could to secure the maintenance of stable conditions and to act as it were as a bridge between the Ruler, for whom most of them express loyalty and attachment, and the popular political forces of which they should have a ready understanding from their experience of political systems in other countries both in the Middle East and elsewhere. One would think that they would have an excellent opportunity for advising the Ruler in a friendly and constructive manner of the necessity of orderly progress and at the same time of bringing their influence to bear, either directly or by private promises of financial support, on the political movement in order to ensure that it did not fall into extremist hands and did not operate in such a manner as to affect the commercial stability of Bahrain. In fact these men dissociate themselves altogether from political life. They refuse to sit on public committees. They do not take the opportunities available to them to tell the Ruler bluntly what is happening among the people and they pay contributions to the funds of the political movement out of fear of having their windows broken rather than as an investment in political security, carrying with it the influence of a major shareholder. We take every opportunity of urging the members of this group to change their negative attitude and play the part which is open to them, but so far without noticeable result.

3. As a further comment on our own part in the recent political developments and in particular in the acute phase of negotiation which led up to the ending of the strike, it may be pointed out that it has long been one of the objects of our policy in Bahrain to make sure that as the reformist political movement obtains greater power it should not do so in opposition to us as has so often happened in other countries emerging from backward régimes. By maintaining a strong link with this movement we have been trying to make our small contribution to the "effendi problem" which has puzzled us so much and for such a long time in many Middle Eastern countries where we have found it not too difficult to establish and maintain relations of understanding and sympathy with autocratic or unsophisticated régimes, but have almost always found ourselves on the other side of the barricades from the emerging political movements. The Persian Gulf States are clearly a case in which it is particularly easy to fall into this situation in view of our long-standing treaty arrangements with the Rulers and the unusual degree of loyalty which we have in most cases received from them. I do not claim that

we shall succeed, in spite of the efforts we have made, in retaining the sympathy of the political movement in Bahrain but I would maintain that once it is accepted that we cannot give the Ruler armed support in putting down all political movements by force the only hope for the future is for us to keep a foot in each camp and try to let the reformists feel that they have something to gain from their relationship with us and in the hope that we can, by persuasion, push the Ruler along just fast enough to keep pace with reasonable demands for reform and popular participation in government. The political movement is at present predominantly moderate, and, so far as we know, has not been penetrated by Communists. It is, however, under some degree of Egyptian influence, certainly to the extent of accepting the Egyptian view on general Middle East questions. Now that the newly-named Committee of National Union has been recognised by the Bahrain Government it may be easier for us to retain our contact with it without so much risk that we should thereby antagonise the Ruler.

4. In conclusion I would like to record my appreciation of the services of my Information Officer, Colonel Anderson, who, during these recent events, has acted energetically and skilfully as our intermediary with the representatives of the political movement and has managed in some cases to establish useful personal relations with them.

5. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Cairo, Beirut, Baghdad, Amman, Damascus, Jedda, Washington, P.O.M.E.F. and Persian Gulf posts.

I have, &c.

B. A. B. BURROWS.

Enclosure No. 1

(1011/55/56)

Mr. Gault to Sir Bernard Burrows (Bahrain)

(No. 4. Confidential)
Sir,

*Her Majesty's Political Agency, Bahrain,
March 20, 1956.*

In my despatch No. 12 (1011/107/55G) of November 20, 1955, I had the honour to report to Your Excellency various political developments in Bahrain which led to a period of political calm in the Shaikhdom. This period of quiet continued over the turn of the year and has only recently been disturbed, as a result largely of the elections for the Education Council to which I referred in my despatch under reference and which is the first of the three supervisory councils to be created. This work could in fact hardly have been expected to take place without some excitement.

2. In December the Ruler of Bahrain issued an ordinance setting out the methods to be followed for the election to the Health and Education Councils and setting up an election authority to organise the elections. Any male person over 25 who was a Bahraini subject resident in Bahrain for the past twelve months and literate and with a clean record might stand for election. Any male person over 18 and with otherwise similar qualifications might vote. The authorities at once set about making an electoral role—the longest task to be performed in organising the election. This took some time and it was not possible to have the election for the Education Council, the first to be set up, until February 10, a Friday and the weekly holiday.

3. In the weeks just before the election the High Executive Committee was active in advertising its candidates and in canvassing, or perhaps more correctly, ordering, support for them. It was not without significance in this connexion that there were only six candidates put up by the Committee for six places. At least one and probably most of them had not been asked in advance whether they would be willing to stand. Their names, Haj Khalil al Moayyed, Sayed Ali al Tajir, Sayed Mohamed Qasim Shiravi, Sayed Qasim Fakhroo, Sayed Taqi al Baharna and Sayed Ali Ebrahim Abdul Ali were announced by the High Executive Committee on January 18. Of these six, three were Sunnis and three Shias. On January 24 another political party, hastily scratched together to oppose the High

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Executive Committee and calling itself the National Front announced three candidates, Sayed Hamed bin Mubarak al Fadhil, Sayed Ahmed bin Abdulla al Subah al Bin Ali and Sayed Salim bin Rashid al Absey, all Sunnis, and all standing more or less close to the Ruler. There were therefore nine candidates for the six places. For the week or so before the election both sides actively canvassed for support, for the first time in Bahrain using loudspeakers in cars. These were, however, prohibited on the day of the elections. The election authority too was at pains to explain to the electorate by posters and by the Bahrain wireless, the method and the object of voting.

4. The result however was a foregone conclusion and once again showed the hold, a mixture of conviction and fear, which the High Executive Committee has on the people of Bahrain. Out of an electorate of 23,479, 18,981 voted, or 81 per cent. of the electorate. The number of spoilt votes was so small as to be negligible. The successful candidates were the six put forward by the High Executive Committee. All received between 17,000 and 18,000 votes each, in decreasing sequence, Haj Khalil al Moayyed receiving the most. The National Front candidates received only a thousand-odd votes each, the top figure being 1,400-odd and the bottom 1,100. It was the first time an election on such a large scale had taken place in Bahrain and in the circumstances both organisation and execution can be said to have been good. Voting, though nominally secret was not so and indeed could not have been so with an electorate estimated at 70 per cent. illiterate. There were no incidents of any kind.

5. The election can be said with some justification, even allowing for a degree of intimidation, to be a formal success of magnitude for the High Executive Committee who were not slow to profit from this apparently overwhelming degree of support accorded them by what must be regarded as the bulk of the population of Bahrain. And as has so often—unfortunately—been the case in the past, the Bahrain Government played into their hands by excessive slowness in making up its mind who should be appointed to make up the other half of the Council of twelve members. At the same time the High Executive Committee found two other points on which to attack the Government. These were the proposal to bring in a number of Iraqis to serve in the State police, because not enough Bahrainis could be found and the alleged delay in arranging for the Egyptian jurist, Dr. Abdul Razzak Sanهوري, to undertake the revision of the draft penal code and the preparation of a civil code. The two last matters were mentioned in a circular issued by the High Executive Committee on February 12 but the question of the appointment of the Government members of the Education Council did not come up until February 21 when the Committee issued a circular in which a week's respite was given the Government to settle these three matters (of course in a way acceptable to the High Executive Committee), otherwise the Committee would take such steps as it considered necessary in the name of the people.

6. The Ruler and his Government had in fact been somewhat inept over nominating the official members of the Education Council. While it was not altogether unreasonable to await the outcome of the election before finally deciding it would have been as well to have something, however tentative, worked out beforehand. This however the Ruler did not, and would not, do. Indeed it was over a week after the elections before he really addressed his mind to the matter. Further delay was unavoidable because of the need to obtain the prospective members' agreement in writing to accept nominations and so it was not until the end of the month that a final list had been drawn up. By this time the High Executive Committee by its announcements and by talk had begun to whip up public opinion against those who were thought to be the official members. This arose, apart from what might be called disapproval of certain people on personal grounds for three reasons. First, the Government some time before the elections had decided that its own employees could not stand as candidates for election. This was because the Government was finding by experience that its good Arab officials, who are few anyhow, were spending more time in sitting on committee than in doing their departmental work with the result that the latter was suffering.

7. This decision which I think was a correct one was accepted unwillingly by the High Executive Committee whose sympathisers are many of the better Arab Government officials. But the Government did not apply the same rule to the members of the Education Council whom it proposed to appoint. Two of the six official members were shaikhs of the Al Khalifah who hold official positions, one as a judge in the Joint Court and the other the chairman of the Sunni waqf

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committee and also head of a committee which censors the newspapers. Second, one of the appointed members had stood for election as a National Front candidate and failed and the High Executive Committee felt that no candidate who failed at the elections should subsequently be appointed. Third was the question of the chairman of the Council. When, in October 1955, the Ruler had agreed to these supervisory councils being half elected and half appointed nothing had been said about a chairman. This omission became apparent as soon as the Government set about considering the appointment of their six members of the Council. The Government's proposal was that Shaikh Abdulla bin Isa, the Ruler's uncle, who had for thirty years been connected with the Education Department, and who bears the title of Minister of Education, should be chairman with only a casting vote. This would have followed previous custom for committees like this when the Government usually appointed the chairman. However, the High Executive Committee objected to this largely, it seems, because they feared that it would mean their side, the elected members, would thereby always be outvoted rather than because of antipathy to Shaikh Abdullah himself. A position of virtual deadlock had thus been reached.

8. This state of deadlock, which unfortunately has arisen so frequently over the last two years, in the relations between the Ruler of Bahrain and his Government on the one hand and the nationalist on the other illustrates, again unfortunately, the two chief weaknesses of the Bahrain Government, its slowness to move and almost unbelievable facility for doing the wrong thing. It also illustrates the ineptitude of the Government's public relations.

9. These weaknesses are due to the peculiar way in which the Bahrain Government is constituted. The Government in effect consists of the Ruler and his Adviser, Sir Charles Belgrave. The Ruler is by nature a slow mover. He is by nature averse from taking an awkward or unpalatable decision. He is also by upbringing and by temperament sadly lacking in the political sense without which an oriental ruler can never hope successfully to pick his way among all the inevitable obstacles which always surround him. Shaikh Sulman succeeded his father in 1942. Mr. Belgrave—as he was then—had already been in Bahrain as Financial Adviser for sixteen years and so Shaikh Sulman had never had either the incentive or the opportunity to learn the art of politics. The Adviser has, therefore, in order to get things done, acquired the habit of exercising more executive authority than he should have done and at the same time the Ruler has tended to shelter behind his Adviser when unpleasant decisions had to be taken—making his excuse always that the Adviser had wanted it this or that way. This in turn has brought the Adviser the reputation among the Bahrainis for being the real ruler of Bahrain. Moreover, in recent years the Adviser has found it more and more difficult, because of the increasing work of the Government to keep up with his work and things have more and more fallen into arrear. The ordinary routine dealings which this Agency has with him all take a quite excessively long time to achieve a result. It is not therefore surprising that the Belgrave System should have aroused opposition among the people who feel that nothing ever gets done and when it is done it is as often as not done in the wrong way. Here the Ruler is as much at fault as the Adviser for he fails completely to carry his family with him by telling them what is going on and what his plans are, without necessarily agreeing with their views. They regard the Ruler as too autocratic as the people do the Adviser. Both the Ruler and his Adviser because of their autocratic outlook completely fail to appreciate the need for and the idea of public relations. It is true that last summer a Public Relations Department was set up with the Adviser's son, Mr. James Belgrave, in charge of it but the latter's activities have so far consisted only in acting as general factotum to his father, in looking after visitors, foreign journalists and in running—not very well—the Government's broadcasting station. He has little comprehension of the need to explain what the Government is doing to the people of Bahrain, and is certainly not encouraged in this by his father.

10. The Government of Bahrain therefore tends to be too distant from the mass of the people. The Ruler will only talk to a few people whom he knows will agree with him. And the Adviser is too busy really to have time to consider or think about what the public may want or think.

11. It is against this background that we must consider the demand, which was being talked about, though not actually made after the deadlock on the

Education Council, for the removal of the Adviser. As this became the chief point in the disturbance which took place on March 2 at the time of the visit of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, to Bahrain and the subsequent disturbances of March 11 and later, I propose to deal with it in my next despatch.

I have, &c.

C. A. GAULT.

Enclosure No. 2

(1011/56/56)

Mr. Gault to Sir Bernard Burrows (Bahrain)

(Despatch No. 5. Confidential)
Sir,

*Her Majesty's Political Agency,
Bahrain, March 22, 1956.*

In my despatch No. 4 of March 20, 1956, I had the honour to report to your Excellency on recent political developments in Bahrain up to the end of February. I now have the honour to report on the disturbances at the time of the visit here of Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Selwyn Lloyd, on March 2 and on the disturbance of March 11 and the subsequent general strike which ended on March 16.

2. In my despatch under reference I spoke of the weaknesses in the Bahrain Government which have led to a general feeling of frustration among the population of Bahrain. These weaknesses had arisen partly from the position of the Adviser to the Bahrain Government, Sir Charles Belgrave and partly from the lack of political sense of the Ruler. Political feeling had already been aroused over the Education Council on which deadlock had been reached. In this connexion talk had begun among the reformists of demanding the removal of the Adviser.

3. Although, as you will recall I had, when the Secretary of State's visit was first mentioned in January, expressed the view that if he came the reformists—the High Executive Committee and followers—might seek to make his visit the occasion of some kind of demonstration, the Adviser whom I consulted thought anything of the kind very unlikely. And on the day of the visit and just before neither I, nor anyone else had, or had had, any reason to anticipate any trouble at all.

4. As is known a larger crowd than usual had gathered on the road at the small town of Muharraq and when the Secretary of State passed, about 7.15 p.m., it shouted, in Arabic, "down with Belgrave." The crowd, which had only collected just before the procession passed, had obviously been told what to say. As the procession of cars passed the excitement of the crowd increased rapidly so that when the Ruler came through only a few minutes later he himself was shouted at and had his car quite severely dented by kicks and blows. There were also shouts of "down with the imperialists" and "down with the colonisers." Several other cars were also slightly damaged in this way. The crowd then seems to have got out of hand and been completely carried away by its own hysteria. About half an hour after the procession had passed two British Overseas Airways Corporation buses on their way from the airport were stopped and heavily stoned. One got through owing to the presence of mind of the driver but with its windows smashed. The other was abandoned and so severely damaged that its body at least will have to be replaced. A Bahrain Petroleum Company bus was also badly damaged by stones. Other cars were stoned as they passed. There was then a lull from about 8.30 p.m. till about 10 p.m. Cars were able to pass but were subjected to some stone throwing.

5. The Secretary of State had meanwhile proceeded to your house in the Residency where he held a Press conference and thence went on the new Qodhaibia Palace where he was entertained to dinner by the Ruler. At 10.30 p.m., just as the Secretary of State was about to leave the palace to return to the airport I received a message from the Adviser, Sir Charles Belgrave, who had previously been called

away, saying that there was still a crowd of 200-300 people on the road at Muharraq and vehicles were unable to pass. The Adviser recommended delaying departure. It was decided that the Secretary of State and his party should return to your house at the Residency to wait until it would be possible to pass along the Muharraq road without difficulty. It appears that the crowds on the road in Muharraq had increased about 10 p.m. or shortly after and had become more excited. Just before that time the clerical staff with the Secretary of State's party had successfully passed through on their way back to the airport. To cut a long story short it was not until about 1.30 a.m. on March 3 that Colonel Hamersley, the Assistant Commandant of Police who was at Muharraq himself, reported that the road was clear and that it would be possible to go through. This was done, under heavy escort, and the Secretary of State was able to reach the airfield without any difficulty and proceed on his journey to Karachi, after a delay of nearly four hours.

6. It is still difficult to say with certainty who or what caused this demonstration. As I have indicated in my despatch No. 4 of March 20, political feeling in Bahrain was at the time relatively high, because of the deadlock over the Education Council and talk could be heard of demanding Sir Charles Belgrave's removal. There was, however, nothing to show intentions of any action, whether by demonstration or otherwise to emphasise that demand. Lieutenant-Colonel Anderson, your Information Officer had only a few days previously been in touch with the Secretary of the High Executive Committee, Abdul Rahman al Bakir and had learned from him that there would be nothing in the way of political action by the Committee till after the Secretary of State's visit. After the Secretary of State had gone some members of the Committee were at apparent pains to express to Lieutenant-Colonel Anderson their regret at what had happened and certainly all moderate feeling in Bahrain was shocked at the lack of respect and the incorrectness of the welcome shown to a distinguished visitor who was at the same time a guest of Bahrain and so according to Arab traditions entitled to courtesy and politeness rather than hostility. What I think may have happened was that the Committee spoke with two voices. We already knew that there was discussion over whether a strike should be called to seek to force the Government's hand over the Education Council. Those who supported a strike were mainly the Shias, who have a tradition of hostility to the Government and those who were against such action were the Sunnis in the Committee. It may be that while such individuals as the Secretary to the Committee, who has always been consistent in advocating moderation, did not intend anything to happen the more extreme elements decided to organise what was intended to be a peaceful demonstration, as the Secretary of State passed, against the Adviser, on the grounds that the Adviser was British and therefore pressure could best be brought to bear through the British Secretary of State and having regard to the fact that last year the Committee submitted a memorandum to Sir Anthony Eden, the then Secretary of State, when he passed through Bahrain on his way to Bandung. It is clear that the demonstration was planned and not spontaneous. Things were made easier for the demonstrators in that at that particular time, 7 p.m., crowds were returning from football matches and in any case the hour before sunset is always one when people go out on to the streets. The excitement of the demonstrators rose very quickly as was evidenced by the change from shouting and thumping the cars in the procession with fists to stoning and breaking windows which took place in less than half an hour. By that time hooliganism and mob hysteria had gained the upper hand. After the relative lull from about 8.30 p.m. until 10 p.m. during which the road never emptied of people the crowd grew again, possibly strengthened by people coming back from cinemas, and there is some evidence of liquor having been about. By this time too the police had tried to intervene but unsuccessfully because their numbers were too small—only some 75 men who were all at one end of the road only so could never do more than threaten the crowd which would disperse only to return behind them. The police did this two or three times but without any continuing effective result except that of stalemate. Eventually Colonel Hamersley decided to withdraw his police and to let it be known that he was doing so—as if nothing more would happen that night. This move was effective for as soon as the police went the crowds did likewise and so it became possible for the Secretary of State to pass without incident or difficulty. Colonel Hamersley himself arrested four men but one of his Arab officers let them go again, without his knowledge, no doubt acting out of fear of reprisals. There were no casualties either among the crowd or among the police. By the following day things were normal again.

7. The High Executive Committee which as a whole was clearly much embarrassed by the occurrence and some of whose members admitted that, whether they had had a hand in it or not it had seriously damaged their hitherto good reputation for orderliness, sought to make out that the whole thing had been engineered by their rivals, an organisation of no great strength but supported by various members of the ruling family, called the National Front. No evidence was forthcoming to show that this was indeed so. It was also said that the Saudis had had a hand in it because the editor of a Dhahran newspaper was said to have been to Bahrain a few days previously with a large sum of money. But this story too did not bear close examination. Neither did the story which appeared in some London newspapers that the demonstration arose out of dissatisfaction at the imprisonment of an individual whose house was near the scene. It is a fact that one leading member of the High Executive Committee, Abdul Aziz Shemlan, formerly employed by the British Bank of the Middle East and the son of a man who had been deported from Bahrain some 20 years ago for seditious activities, addressed the crowd twice—the first time when under the influence of drink when he was unintelligible but inflammatory and the second, some hours later when he advised the crowd to go away and not attack the police. Be all this as it may it is undeniable that the activities of the High Executive Committee over the last 18 months have created an atmosphere in which incidents of this kind can all too easily happen—and happen unexpectedly, as in this case.

8. During the week succeeding that of the visit of the Secretary of State negotiation was carried on at your instruction with Abdul Rahman al Bakir of the High Executive Committee by Lieutenant-Colonel Anderson to try to bring the Government and the Committee close enough together to enable the former to recognise the latter, which we held would enable the Government to have direct contact with the Committee and hereby to be able to discuss matters with it. Even though the Ruler and his Government disliked the Committee there was no doubt that it was a political force—indeed the only political force in Bahrain—to be reckoned with and consequently a political settlement would be necessary sooner or later. Matters had advanced so far by March 8 that the Ruler had agreed with you and me that he would recognise the Committee if it changed its name and he agreed to Sir Charles Belgrave meeting four representatives of it—two Sunni and two Shia, on March 10 to discuss details directly—without our intervention. This meeting passed off quite satisfactorily and there was a good prospect that a formula of recognition would be achieved within a couple of days.

9. Unfortunately, on the morning of Sunday, March 11, a dispute arose, about 10.15 a.m., in the municipal vegetable market in Manama. By a municipal regulation of some years standing wares may not be displayed for sale on the pavement or in the roadway. For a month or so this regulation has been specially enforced since observation of it had become generally lax. On this occasion a vegetable seller had his wares on a pavement, and not in the market area proper. A municipal inspector asked him to move and he refused. The former brought a policeman who did the same and then apparently sought to move his boxes of vegetables, whereupon the vegetable seller struck the policeman. Then all the vegetable sellers turned on the four or five policemen who were in the market and on the inspector and sought to attack them. They fled to the municipality across the street and took refuge there. A fair-sized crowd gathered round the municipality and it became necessary to send for police reinforcements. It appears that the crowd, which was largely Shia since the vegetable sellers are mostly of that sect, collected unusually quickly and in unusually large numbers. It did not disperse, although at least two of the Shia members of the High Executive Committee came later and urged them to do so. Other persons, who have not yet been identified, at the same time and also later, urged the crowd to remain, which it did. At 3 p.m. the police tried to back a police lorry up to the door of the municipality in order to let the police shut up in the building get into it and so get away but this failed and it was about 3.20 p.m. when a burst of firing occurred which caused two deaths immediately and three subsequently and some 12 or 15 people injured. The police at the time said that persons in the crowd fired first but some at any rate of the deaths were caused by police bullets. However at least one automatic pistol bullet of a type not used by the police was extracted from one of the wounded. According to Colonel Hamersley the police had been told to fire over the crowd's head and it is probable that some policemen fired too low. The crowd then broke up. Some 10 minutes later there was another short

burst of firing from one or two cars near the police fort some distance from the market. This was pistol fire and apparently caused no harm to anyone. The exact circumstances under which fire was opened are not yet fully known but are to be the subject of a public enquiry by the Judicial Adviser to the Bahrain Government, Mr. Peace, and the Assistant Judge of Her Majesty's Court for Bahrain, Mr. Mawdsley, as will be described later.

10. This firing by the police seems in the circumstances to have been justified as the crowd which was angry clearly meant harm to the policemen inside the municipality and had refused for over five hours to disperse in spite of requests made by the police over loudspeakers. However, in the general state of tense political feeling already existing in Bahrain the incident gave the nationalists an excuse to excite popular feeling still more against the Government. On March 12 the High Executive Committee announced its condemnation of the firing, demanding the punishment of whoever was responsible. At the same time the demand was made for the removal of the Adviser, Sir Charles Belgrave. The Committee added that they supported the general strike which "the people" had decided upon as a means of pressing their demands but recommended that there should be no disorder. This seemed to indicate that the Committee was no longer in fact in control of the situation but was trying to catch up with events in the hope of recovering its position. Most work had in any case already stopped, shops having remained shut since the afternoon of Sunday March 11 and there had been some stoning of cars in Muharraq.

11. The strike continued until Friday, March 16. On Tuesday and Wednesday March 13 and 14 there were a good many incidents and the situation looked as though it would go beyond the ability of the hard-pressed State police to control. Two or three European-owned cars were burnt and many sustained damage to body work and windows from stones both in Muharraq and in Manama. At one period stones were laid on main roads of a size to stop cars passing and the cars were then stoned when turning to go away. This activity the police found very difficult to deal with as whenever they arrived the people responsible melted away only to go elsewhere. Nails set in crown corks were also placed on the roads and many vehicles had their tyres punctured. Nearly all cars molested belonged to European firms or individuals. The oil company's buses came in for hostile intentions until they were withdrawn outside Manama. While it was usually possible to circulate in a car in Manama, by using alternative routes, the road through Muharraq remained virtually impassable by day for Europeans in cars during the whole of the strike except the last day. At night, however, between 2 and 5 a.m., the road was always clear so that it was possible for essential staff to reach the airport and for troop movements to be carried out without difficulty. By virtue of diverting all civilian air traffic except British Overseas Airways Corporation it was possible adequately to conserve aviation spirit stocks so that replenishment did not become necessary. Apart from the Bahrain Petroleum Company whose cars and buses were stoned when seen, one British firm and one British-Arab firm were picked out for victimisation at different times during the strike. The British firm was Cable and Wireless, several of whose Anglo-Indian staff were threatened with physical violence for going on duty; in one case an employee's car was burnt and the man himself was slightly injured and very frightened by a crowd. This was, I think, not because Cable and Wireless are British but because they incurred much popular odium last year when they put their telephone rates up and there was a strike—if it may be called so—of Arab subscribers. Another firm was the Arabian Construction and Maintenance Engineering Company, a concern set up by British interests in partnership with the local Arab firm of Kanoo to do construction work for the oil company. This firm which has been in existence for about a year has had a most unhappy record of labour disputes, bad British staff and poor British management (until comparatively recently). One of their cars was burnt and an attempt was made to burn two others, mainly led by a troublesome employee who had been dismissed and who had severely attacked one of the British employees of the firm. In none of these three cases including that of the oil company, would I say that there was specifically anti-British feeling. All foreigners with white faces came in for attention because they were strangers in Bahrain and therefore easy game.

12. On Tuesday evening, March 13, the High Executive Committee seems to have realised that things were getting out of hand and began to try to stop the general disorder. They tried to call the strike off, borrowing the police

loudspeakers for the purpose and using them with a police escort. This however did not prove very effective. They also offered to produce 150 to 200 men to help the police to restrain the throwing of stones at cars and the laying of road blocks. Much of these two activities was due to young men of the Persian and Omani communities who are both turbulent when given the chance. By Thursday their influence had become effective and while small crowds were still stopping some cars in certain streets they were not molested in any way and could eventually pass.

13. While the strike was going on there had been contact through Lieutenant-Colonel Anderson with Abdul Rahman al Bakir, the Secretary of the High Executive Committee and also through yourself and myself with the Ruler. You had received the Ruler's agreement that the negotiations previously in train between the Adviser and the High Executive Committee should be continued with the idea of making a settlement on the recognition issues. At the same time the Ruler agreed to an earlier proposal of yours that he should set up a small Administrative Council of, say, five members, both of the ruling family and of officials, to act as an extension of the Adviserate and consider matters which would otherwise have to be dealt with by the Adviser and thus lighten the load on him. The Ruler had also agreed as had the Adviser (to whom you and I first recommended the idea a year ago) that he—the Adviser—should give up his nominal post of Commandant of Police to Colonel Hamersley. The only difficulty was that the Ruler wished us to carry out the negotiations rather than do them himself. Although this was not wholly desirable from our point of view, in that we did not wish to be in the middle, you decided that in the interests of a quick end to the strike, it would be worth while swallowing our prejudices. As a result of this it was decided on Wednesday, March 14 that I should summon the Committee leaders, two Sunnis, Abdul Aziz Shemlan and Abdul Rahman al Bakir and two Shias, Mohsin al Tajir and Abdul Ali Alaiwat and see if some agreement could be reached with them as a settlement which would enable the strike to be called off. It had been intended that the Adviser should be present but the Committee, not unexpectedly in view of the public demand for his recall, refused to meet him. His secretary, Yusuf Shirawi, an able young Bahraini who had taken a degree at Glasgow University, came in instead for the Government side. At this meeting I confined myself to hearing what the other side had to say without offering anything in return. I came to the conclusion with which you agreed, that in order to secure a settlement it would be necessary to clinch the recognition issue, even if that meant agreeing to something the Ruler would not much like. This entailed in essence accepting the new name for the High Executive Committee—the Committee of National Union and in accepting the Committee's demand that the suggestions it might put to the Government should be considered in the light of its having at present a larger following than any other political body in Bahrain. The other demand which was relatively easy to meet was for an enquiry into the shooting. The difficulty here was whether an enquiry would weaken the morale of the police as had been the case after the enquiry into the shooting in July 1954. The Adviser considered that an enquiry into the shooting of March 11 only would have had this effect. It was therefore decided to offer a general enquiry into all the incidents and disturbances since March 2 including the strike and not only one into the firing of March 11. The demand to which we could not accede, both because of our general position in Bahrain and because of the Ruler's feelings was the removal of the Adviser and it was decided that I should say so adding that in order to improve the administrative machine the Ruler had decided to set up an Administrative Council and make Colonel Hamersley Commandant of Police instead of the Adviser. A further demand had been made—by the Shias—at the first meeting that foreigners should not be employed in the police because it was allegedly an Adeni policeman who had had the original squabble with the vegetable seller on March 11. This demand I rejected outright on the grounds that, with the police under extreme pressure because of the strike it would be most unwise to disarm the proportion of foreigners among them. Before the strike strong opposition had been expressed by the High Executive Committee to the proposed employment by the Bahrain Government of about 130 Iraqi police and you had felt it necessary to stop them coming for the time being. This particular point was not however mentioned. Accordingly I made this general offer to the four members of the Committee at a second meeting on Thursday, March 15, making it clear that what I said was subject to the final approval of the Ruler who had been told of the course of the first meeting. The four members of the Committee

declared themselves ready to agree to this offer subject to reference to their followers and expressed the hope that they could succeed in calling the strike off. I made it clear that there could be no question of the Adviser's removal at the present time. I also said that this was the best we could do as intermediaries and repeated a warning I had given the previous day that we strongly disapproved of the disorderliness of the strike and were ready and had the means to intervene should things become any worse. It was noticeable during these meetings that the most difficult people to convince were the two Shias. On Friday, March 16, both Manama and Muharraq remained quiet. The police, who by now had had some much needed rest, were finding that they could pass along the Muharraq road without difficulty. In the morning you and I saw the Ruler and some of the leading members of his family and explained why and how we had made the offer we had made, reminding him at the same time that it was at his specific request that we had carried out the negotiations. He agreed, without too much difficulty, to what had been done. Late on Friday night we learned that the Committee had succeeded in calling the strike off and the Bahrain radio broadcast an announcement by the Committee to that effect followed by a proclamation announcing the setting up of the Committee of Enquiry and another saying that the Government would recognise and treat with committees set up by any section of the people to enable them to represent their views to the Government. An announcement was also made that the Committee of National Union had come into existence and was recognised by the Government. By Saturday morning Bahrain had more or less returned to normal.

14. Unlike the general strike of December 1954 this strike was at no time complete. My own local staff came to work every day with the exception of one or two who lived in Muharraq. Government offices and foreign firms also found that most of their staff came in—even though surreptitiously. The fish and vegetable markets worked to some extent every day. Buses and taxis disappeared because most of the drivers are Shias—though towards the end of the strike a few taxis were working with false number plates in order not to lose the chance of earning money. Before the strike was announced by the Committee on Monday, March 12, I had advised foreign firms to declare that they would not pay strike pay and the Government did the same. Very few of the oil company's local workers reported mainly because of there being no public transport. The Company however was able to operate the refinery with British staff. What affected the general public—and very salutarily—was the lack of paraffin during the last days of the strike. Paraffin is very generally used for cooking by all classes and after the first day the oil company sent none in to Manama or Muharraq because of the danger to its lorries and because of having no drivers. By the Friday, the last day, many people felt this lack acutely.

15. The Bahrain State Police stood up very well indeed to the strain of the strike, and their morale remained high throughout. Unlike the incident of March 2 when the crowd at Muharraq shouted at the police to disobey orders to try to clear the road the public do not appear to have shown hostility to the police at all. The credit for all this must go to Colonel Hamersley without whose firm and wise leadership—and sound previous training and organisation—the police would most likely have been useless. The weakness of the police lies, as it has always lain—when trouble threatens, in its lack of men. The force only numbers about 450 men and this with all normal guards and duties only leaves a reserve of 70 to 80 for a striking force. On this occasion of course the usual duties were greatly reduced which yielded some men but not enough to withstand the fatigue of continuous operations day and night against crowds and the like. However, the main points the police did hold, which meant that it was never necessary to consider the use of British troops although they were ready if needed. Part of the road from the Residency and Naval Base at Jufair into Manama was patrolled by our troops at the request of Colonel Hamersley but this was not in any case a danger area. When the strike looked imminent on Sunday, March 11 you arranged to bring in by air the company of the King's Royal Rifle Corps at Sharjah which went to Jufair and to the Royal Air Force station at Muharraq and subsequently a second company of the same regiment was flown in from Cyrenaica. The frigate H.M.S. *Loch Lomond* lay at Sitra jetty to be ready to patrol the road from the oil camp at Awalai to the refinery in case any attempt was made to prevent the company's European staff reaching the refinery.

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16. There were several cases of Indian and Pakistani employees of the oil company being threatened and in one or two cases attacked for going to work and on one occasion British staff of the Eastern Bank were stoned when walking to the bank. As I have said I do not consider that such incidents showed specifically anti-British feeling, though of course such feeling could very easily develop. Rather was it a way of showing dissatisfaction with the foreigner, the outsider, one of whom—the Adviser—the people blame however wrongly, for many of their troubles. One factor here which can be of danger for the future is the presence in Bahrain of a relatively large number of newly-arrived British employees of contractors who know nothing about the east, are not very interested and not prepared to bother to learn—perhaps because they will only be here a year or less. They, through ignorance of local conditions and prejudice, could cause themselves and us much trouble through getting into awkward situations particularly where native tempers run high as they did last week.

17. I have already in my despatch No. 4 of March 20, spoken of the frustration felt by the people of Bahrain at the apparent lack of understanding of their needs and wishes on the part of the Ruler and Sir Charles Belgrave. This frustration has largely stimulated the demand for the latter's removal. It is quite true to say that the Government of Bahrain is inept, lacks feeling and is slow of movement. The Ruler has never at any time been compelled to stand on his own feet because the Adviser has always been here and the Adviser has never been compelled to adapt himself to changing conditions and move with the times because he has always had the Ruler behind him. The two are the same age and have acquired the same habit over the years of only seeing what they want to see. As regards our policy in Bahrain I think we have reached a turning point. It is no longer a question of whether we do or do not support the Adviser, Sir Charles Belgrave, because he is British and after the Glubb episode in Jordan we do not want to see another key British figure ejected. It is a question of whether we can honestly say that we still consider Sir Charles Belgrave to be the right man in the right place given the advance in political consciousness, not only in Bahrain but in the whole Middle East and whether we should not be wiser, from the point of view of our long-term policy, to set a new course entirely which would inevitably entail dispensing with his services and creating some new post or posts, if possible held by a British official or officials to replace him. This is the logical course but we shall have to consider the effect of such a radical change on the Ruler who is neither intelligent nor adaptable and is stubborn into the bargain. He is also very attached to Sir Charles Belgrave whom he has known and with whom he has worked closely for 30 years—in effect a lifetime and is very loyal to him. When in 1948 your predecessor broached the subject of the Adviser's retirement the Ruler's reaction was such that the matter was dropped. I think it might even be stronger now. There is also the question of the Adviser's own attitude. He may not go willingly though it is possible that he will realise the uselessness of trying to go against the current. As is so often the case, we are on the horns of a dilemma. Sir Charles Belgrave, however, much we may like him personally, is now an anachronism. His continued presence will build up popular feeling against us. The maintenance of our position here and in the Gulf therefore demands a change, particularly if we are to seek to guide events and not be dragged along by them. The Ruler, however, will certainly take any such suggestions very ill and the British position in Bahrain depends upon our agreements with him and his predecessors.

I have, &c.,

C. A. GAULT.

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No. 4

PERSIAN GULF: ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1955

Sir Bernard Burrows to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received May 14)(No. 47. Confidential)
Sir,*Bahrain,
May 7, 1956.*

I have the honour to submit my annual report for 1955 and to enclose a chronological summary of events in the Persian Gulf during that year. It is, as usual, unprofitable to make many general statements about territories which are in many ways so different one from another. One of the common features of the year is perhaps the increasing contact between almost all areas in the Gulf and the outside world, and particularly with the rest of the Arab world. It has for some time been recognised that, as they exhausted other subjects of controversy with ourselves and with the Western Powers, the Arab Nationalists would sooner or later take more interest in the Persian Gulf, and signs of this have become apparent during the year under review, notably in the increase in Egyptian propaganda and penetration, both in Kuwait and Bahrain, and even in the Trucial States. The most noteworthy single event was perhaps the termination of the arbitration with Saudi Arabia over the frontiers of Abu Dhabi and sovereignty over the Buraimi Oasis, the reoccupation of the oasis by the Trucial Oman Levies on behalf of Muscat and Abu Dhabi, and the declaration by Her Majesty's Government of a frontier line between Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia. This action was followed fairly rapidly by the action of the Sultan of Muscat, taken with the full approval of Her Majesty's Government, in restoring his authority in Central Oman, where the Imam had been receptive of Saudi and Egyptian intrigues and was claiming fully independent status. But the events which were perhaps even more portentous for the future of the Gulf States and of our position in them were those which occurred during the year in Bahrain, where the political movement took clearer shape and was able to assert its influence in many instances as against that of the Government.

Kuwait

2. The Ruler's relations with Her Majesty's Government remain on the same footing as before. He has shown no wish

to take over Her Majesty's Government's responsibility for Kuwait's external affairs and he has been glad to shelter behind this responsibility when decisions had to be taken in his interests which might irritate his neighbours, particularly the Saudi Government. The Ruler has seemed not to resent our drawing attention to weaknesses in his internal administrative arrangements, but his assurances that these would be met have not led to any effective curb on the power of individual shaikhs to go their own way in their own departments without regard to the general efficiency of the Government. Hopes that the High Executive Committee might prove to be an effective instrument of re-organisation and reform were disappointed during this year. When Shaikh Fahad returned from Europe at the end of 1954 he reversed many of the decisions which the committee had made relating to the development programme and other matters. After several attempts to obtain the Ruler's support the committee lapsed into ineffectiveness and the shaikhly members ceased attending. In its place the Ruler, who was conscious of growing popular criticism, set up a Family Council consisting of the shaikhs who formerly sat on the High Executive Committee together with the senior shaikhs who are presidents of departments of the Government. The Ruler intended to include in it two Kuwaiti officials outside the Sabah family, but this has not occurred. It is not known what decisions, if any, were taken by the council and it is too early to say whether it will prove a more effective instrument of government than the High Executive Committee. As a further attempt at administrative improvement the Ruler gave Mr. Pelly, who retired as Political Agent in June, a post in his Administration. Mr. Pelly's duties have not yet been satisfactorily clarified.

3. Relations remained strained between Shaikh Abdullah al Mubarak, the Ruler's uncle, and his brothers, Shaikh Fahad and Sabah as Salim. Shaikh Abdullah al Mubarak has abandoned his former exaggerated professions of friendliness towards Her Majesty's Government and

does not trouble to conceal his irritation at what he regards as a change in Her Majesty's Government's attitude towards him. His relationship with an Egyptian cabaret artiste during the time of his prolonged summer holiday in the Lebanon and Europe, and his extravagances, have given rise to considerable popular criticism. Shaikh Sabah as Salim, on the other hand, has gone out of his way to be friendly and co-operative and has done his best to ensure that the police work in harmony with Her Majesty's Courts. In the summer, unlike his half-brother Fahad in 1954, he made the most of an opportunity to visit Britain by closely following an official programme which had been arranged for him by Her Majesty's Government. He spent much time seeing police work in London and he was also able to visit a session of a police court. It is possible that this may have helped to give him a better idea of the way in which the courts under Her Majesty's jurisdiction work and a better understanding of our idea of law. Although all of these senior shaikhs appear to be jockeying for a favourable position to secure the succession should the Ruler die, the Ruler has himself made no move to indicate who he thinks his successor should be. In the meantime the reputation of Shaikh Jabir al Ahmad, the son of the late Ruler, who is the Ruler's representative at Ahmadi, increases each year, though, if the Ruler died soon, his comparative youth might still count heavily against him.

4. The confusion in the development programme and in the direction of the Public Works Department was not resolved during the year. Little progress was made on the larger development schemes which have been under consideration since the departure of General Hasted. Majd ud-Din Jabri, the Syrian engineer, who had been used by Shaikh Fahad in 1953 and the earlier part of 1954 as a counterweight to General Hasted, returned for a short period, but whereas then Shaikh Fahad had supported him in undoing the work of General Hasted, he insisted now on continuing to employ the young Lebanese Druze engineer, Fuad Abdul Baqi, and in listening as much to his advice as to that of Jabri; as a result, after only a short time, Jabri resigned in protest. Birdwood, the senior British engineer in the Kuwait Government, was made acting chief engineer and Abdul Baqi stayed as inspector-general. In November the Development Board decided to define their

respective spheres by making each of them responsible for a different set of projects. Some progress was made in the preparations for putting the port project out to tender once more. During the course of the year the Electricity Department concluded that unless the second power station were operating by next May they would be unable to meet the demands for power after that date. But the Development Board at the instigation of its president, Shaikh Fahad, turned down a proposal that it should be built by the same Anglo-Kuwaiti concern which had built the first station. All the work of the "big five" contractors was completed during the year and, with the exception of Gulf Engineering Company (Richard Costain Limited), who are putting in a claim for some bonus payments to which the Finance Department do not think they are entitled, all of them have settled their accounts with the State and departed.

5. Shaikh Fahad in the early part of the year seemed to attach great importance to pushing ahead with the Shatt-al-Arab Water Scheme and the Ruler asked Her Majesty's Government to negotiate an agreement with the Iraqi Government on his behalf so that arrangements could be made for Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners to put out to tender the work required to carry out the pipeline scheme which they had recommended. The Iraq Government were disposed to allow Kuwait to take the water on the terms of the agreement drafted by Her Majesty's Government but in return they hoped that Kuwait would agree to lease to them the Island of Warba and a strip of land on the shore of the Khor Zubair which they needed to use in connection with their plan to open a port at Umm Qasr. Before the Ruler gave his final approval for the submission of the two agreements to the Iraq Government, opposition in Kuwait to the idea of leasing this territory was given strength by the support of Shaikh Fahad who was afraid that the development of Umm Qasr might deprive Kuwait at some future date of a share in transit trade to the Mediterranean. At the same time the question has been complicated in the minds of the Ruler and his relatives by a suggestion put forward to the Iraq Petroleum Company to lay a pipeline from the Zubair oilfield through Kuwait territory to a terminal to be set up just north of Mina al Ahmadi. By the end of the year no decision had been taken.

6. There was further evidence during the year of small groups of Communists

amongst the Persian and Iraqi communities in Kuwait but there was nothing to show that any significant number of Kuwaitis were themselves involved in the movement. There was, however, considerable criticism amongst a section of Kuwaitis directed at the indecision and apparent misdirection of the Kuwait Government and its failure to keep the development programme moving forward on ordered lines. This found expression in weekly newspapers which were subsequently made liable to censorship and thereupon ceased publication. At one stage a meeting was called for in one of the local mosques to elect representatives to meet the Ruler and to try to achieve a more representative form of government. The meeting was banned by Shaikh Abdullah al Mubarak, the doors of the mosque were locked on the day on which the meeting was to be called and nothing further was heard of it.

7. During the year there was no sign of any decrease in Egyptian influence in Kuwait. The Education Department can find only in Egypt Arabic teachers of the quality they require who are prepared to come to Kuwait. The Egyptian Government helps the Kuwait Education Department to do this by seconding teachers to serve with the Egyptian educational mission in Kuwait who at the same time are able to remain in the service of the Egyptian Government. There are Egyptian advisers in many of the other departments also. The British officials in the Finance Department have, however, been able to maintain the present arrangements for investing surplus funds in the United Kingdom. Egyptian newspapers are widely read throughout Kuwait and the Education Department maintain a permanent mission of students studying in the universities and schools in Egypt. There is little doubt that most Kuwaitis look to Egypt as the exemplar of modern Arabic civilisation and that they see in the present military régime the one hope for the Arabs of escape from the corrupt and bankrupt traditionalist régimes in power elsewhere in the Middle East. Colonel Anwar Sadat, a member of the Egyptian Government and Secretary-General of the Moslem Conference, was welcomed in Kuwait early in the year and paid a second visit in December. A collection was made among Kuwaiti merchants and in the schools for contributions to the recent Egyptian Arms Week and the Ruler allowed the Education Department to make a small contribution from Kuwait Government funds in the name of the

Kuwaiti Students' Mission in Cairo. When the Political Agent took the Ruler to task for making this gesture without consulting him, the Ruler replied stressing the difficulty of his position and the inevitability of his going some way with Arab Nationalist feeling in order to avoid open criticism of his close ties with Her Majesty's Government to which he continued to attach great importance.

8. Her Majesty's Government have continued to maintain their exclusive right to direct contact with the Ruler and Kuwait's relations with other foreign countries have been conducted with this consideration always in mind. In the summer, however, Mr. Herbert Hoover suggested to Her Majesty's Ambassador in Washington that the United States Government ought to share responsibility for affairs in Kuwait with Her Majesty's Government, in view of the important United States investment there. He was, however, given no encouragement. The Persian Government made efforts to persuade Her Majesty's Government to allow them to open a consulate in Kuwait. Their request was turned down but they were told that instead the Political Agent would welcome visits from the Persian Consul-General in Basra to discuss the affairs of the Persian community in Kuwait. Since then the Persian Consul-General has made several visits and has asked for the assistance of the Political Agent in taking up with the Kuwait Government a number of cases affecting Persians. The Pakistani Government also sought permission to open a consulate in Kuwait. This was refused but they were authorised to appoint a trade agent. No one has yet, however, arrived in Kuwait to take up this post.

9. The Kuwait Oil Company's production during the year reached the figure of 53,894,000 tons. As a result of the revised agreements in Iraq and in Saudi Arabia, the Ruler informed the Kuwait Oil Company that he also wished the 1951 Oil Agreement to be revised so that he would obtain terms at least as favourable as those granted to his neighbours. A new agreement was negotiated in the early summer and signed in October by which the Ruler's 50 per cent. share of the oil profits will in future be directly related to the posted price. The Ruler agreed to bring into force at the same time a revised income tax decree which would count as a corresponding tax for the purpose of relief from United Kingdom tax. As a result of the new agreement the Ruler's

annual income tax is expected to be in the neighbourhood of £90 million. On several occasions during the year opportunity was taken to express to the Kuwait Oil Company Her Majesty's Government's concern at the company's lack of adequate representation in Kuwait Town. Up to the present their Chief Local Representative has been Colonel Dickson, who on account of age and infirmity has not been well able to explain Oil Company problems to the Ruler nor has he been able to keep the company in close touch with movements of opinion among the younger elements in the town. The company have recognised this problem and have decided to arrange for their political adviser, Mr. de Candole, to come out to reside in Kuwait Town; he was due to arrive during February of 1956. The operations of the American Independent Oil Company have continued to expand during the year and production has now reached the figure of 1,241,753 tons, of which a half is taken off by Pacific Western Oil Company, the Saudi concessionaire; they have built their own pipe-line which runs from a separate gathering centre to storage tanks and a loading point at Raz az-Zur. The Saudi Government showed more interest in the Neutral Zone than hitherto and in August they sent a party there led by Turki bin Ataishan to install a Saudi Governor in the zone. Turki met the manager of Aminoil and informed him that in future half the industry in the zone should come under Saudi jurisdiction and Saudi labour laws. Shortly afterwards Turki left, leaving behind a governor, a labour officer, and a small party of retainers. Since then the Governor has made no further effort to interfere with Aminoil or to set up any form of permanent administration. He has called on Shaikh Jabir al Ahmad, who represents the Ruler at Ahmadi and in the Neutral Zone, and had a friendly discussion with him. It seems that for the time being at any rate the Saudi Government are content to allow the present *ad hoc* arrangements to stand. In December the manager of Aminoil informed the Ruler of his wish to make test borings on the Islands of Kubbar, Qaru and Umm al-Maradim. The Ruler, who wished to discuss the matter first with the Political Agent, was told that in our view there was no objection to work starting on Kubbar but that it would be better not to allow Aminoil to work on Qaru and Umm al-Maradim until a Note had been presented to the Saudi Government proposing an exchange of letters by which the Kuwait

claim to the Island of Farsi would be recognised by the Saudi Government in return for the Ruler of Kuwait giving up his rights in the islands further to the south. The Ruler had previously signified his agreement to a Note being presented to the Saudis on these lines. As a result of enquiries from the Atlantic Refining Company of Philadelphia the Ruler was told by the Political Agent that, although the sea-bed boundaries had not yet been defined, he might if he wished grant a sea-bed concession in terms which left the exact definition of the boundaries imprecise on condition that the company concerned undertook to get in touch with Her Majesty's Government, who would then explain confidentially the limits of an area in which they could safely operate in the light of the conditions then obtaining. The Ruler later instructed Mr. Kemp in London to make it known that he was open to offers for a concession for the sea-bed.

10. Progress has been made by the Social Affairs Department towards providing Kuwait with a Government employees' social security system. A scheme has been drawn up and brought into force in some departments by which all Government employees will work under one set of employment regulations covering their terms of service and rates of pay. Provision is made in these for sick leave, for compensation for injuries attributable to work and for retirement pensions for Kuwaitis and terminal gratuities for others. An Employment Bureau for Kuwaitis has been opened and the department has also made arrangements for the registration of all workers, both Kuwaiti and foreign, for the care of the poor and of the old in institutions and for the removal of beggars from the streets to these institutions. It has also in hand preparations for the first census ever to be held in Kuwait which is to be carried out under the direction of Egyptian statisticians.

11. After considerable argument it was agreed between the Kuwait Government and Cable and Wireless Limited in July that the latter should withdraw completely from Kuwait and that both cable and telephone services should be taken over by the State with effect from January 31, 1956. The Ruler agreed to be responsible for building a new aerodrome on the site recommended last year by the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation Mission and he gave verbal assurances that he would employ a British firm of consultants to

prepare the detailed plans. At the same time he asked for a revised Civil Air Agreement by which the control of the aerodrome would be transferred to him. The Ruler has indicated that he will employ International Aeradio or a similar British organisation to take charge of the actual control arrangements for an interim period until Kuwaitis have been trained to undertake this responsibility. Further protracted negotiations took place about the improvement of the existing runway to enable Viscounts to land on it. During the summer Kuwait Airways, in conjunction with Middle East Airlines, operated Hermes aircraft which had been hired from the new Middle East Servicing Company set up by B.O.A.C. in Beirut. At the end of their first year's operation Kuwait Airways had lost about £50,000 and the local shareholders seemed ready to assign to B.O.A.C. responsibility for the management of the company in addition to the responsibility for operating and maintaining the aircraft. The Kuwait Aero Club has continued to flourish and four more Austers were acquired from the United Kingdom. Eight Kuwaitis were sent to receive further training at an aeronautical school in England.

12. Financial approval was given at the beginning of the year for opening a British Council Centre in Kuwait. A representative was appointed in the spring and a suitable building was found for a centre, and though development of his influence can only be a slow process of expanding personal relationships, he has already been able to win the confidence of the director and other members of the Education Department and it seems possible that in future, even though the Education Department will certainly maintain its own contacts in Britain and elsewhere, individual members of it may come increasingly to look to the British Council representative for advice.

13. Although the tide of progress in Kuwait may seem to have ebbed from the high-water mark which it reached during the early development boom and although there are many aspects of Kuwaiti management of their internal affairs which invite strong criticism, it cannot be denied that almost every Kuwaiti is now better off than he was before the exploitation of oil and that the proportion of revenue which has gone towards projects of public benefit and towards the raising of the standard of

living is much greater than the similar proportion in any of the other Middle Eastern oil-producing countries with the possible exception of Iraq. Individual departments such as the Education Department, the Electricity Department, Social Affairs Department and the Police Department have impressive achievements to their credit and it would be a mistake to obscure this by placing too much emphasis on the many deficiencies in the inevitably somewhat makeshift arrangements which have to be made to absorb much money into the local economy in so short a space of time.

Bahrain

14. In 1955 the political activity which had characterised 1954 continued. This led to notable constitutional development.

15. The year began with the setting up by the Ruler of a committee of Government officials and notables to enquire into the working of the Departments of Public Health, Education, Police and Justice. This committee, which sat for several months, produced a series of quite useful reports on these departments, many of the recommendations being adopted by the Government. During the early part of the year the High Executive Committee, which claimed to represent "the people of Bahrain" and constituted in fact the "sharp end" of the Nationalist Reformist movement, showed considerable activity which, although embarrassing to the Bahrain Government, did have the effect of preventing the demand for reforms from being ignored, and does represent a genuinely and quite widely-felt desire for betterment. It submitted, through the Political Agent, a memorandum to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs when he passed through Bahrain in February, which criticised the Government for its alleged failure to introduce the reforms for which the committee had called in 1954. The memorandum also sought recognition of the committee as representing the people of Bahrain. The Secretary of State's reply refused this, counselling co-operation with the Government and advising against the use of violence. The committee also succeeded in preventing the holding of an election for the Manama municipality by telling people not to vote.

16. In February as a result of the High Executive Committee saying it intended to establish a trade union to comprise all workers and employees the Government

decided, on British advice, to draw up a labour law to regulate conditions of work and to legislate for trade unions which, it was realised on all sides, were now bound to come. A British Ministry of Labour official was made available to advise on the drafting of the law, undertaken by a Government committee on which the workers were represented. When this committee was being set up in April the High Executive Committee, somewhat unexpectedly, gave up its demand for recognition by the Government in return for being allowed unofficially to nominate the workers' representatives on the committee, who were then "elected." Since then the drafting committee has met regularly—and surprisingly amicably—and by the end of the year had nearly completed the draft law. In connection with the labour law the Government in June opened a labour office and employment exchange.

17. In February the Government set up a Department of Public Relations—a step long overdue—and in July a Government broadcasting station was opened.

18. During the summer considerable opposition was voiced to the proposed introduction of a penal code, drawn up by British legal experts with the idea that it might be introduced both for our own jurisdiction in the Persian Gulf as well as for that of the various rulers. This opposition was largely whipped up by the High Executive Committee. It picked mainly on certain aspects of the new code which were held to be abhorrent to the Moslem religion. This was to some extent a cover for the committee's own objection to certain provisions on associations which, it considered, could limit its own activities and scope. Because of doubt about the ability of the Bahrain Government to cope with any serious flouting of its authority—due to weakness in the police force—it was decided in September to postpone the introduction of the code until it could be examined by a suitable Moslem legal expert. During this period it was noticeable that the High Executive Committee's announcements attacking the code were taking an anti-British line—the first time this has happened in Bahrain. This was probably the result of Egyptian inspiration on which the more extreme members of the committee tend to draw.

19. In September the Ruler of Bahrain, Shaikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, began to discuss the general question of the

reforms, for which the High Executive Committee had been pressing for over a year, with certain individuals of the committee. This he did of his own accord. During October these discussions resulted in agreement that he should set up three committees each half elected by popular vote and half appointed by the Government, to supervise, with a large degree of independence, the work of the Departments of Public Health, Education and the various municipalities in Bahrain. This is a big step forward in the development of the elective principle in Bahrain, and indeed in Persian Gulf affairs, and it will be very interesting to see how far it succeeds in practice. At least it gives the people of Bahrain, in theory, some say in—for them—important aspects of government. And it should do a good deal to sidetrack the High Executive Committee's earlier demand for a legislative council, for which Bahrain is not yet ready. The committees had not been set up by the end of the year owing to the relatively long period required to organise the elections.

20. A further manifestation of Egyptian influence was the successful collection in Bahrain of the equivalent of \$U.S.4,500 for the "Arms for Egypt" fund. This collection was organised by the High Executive Committee and contributions were made by the Ruler's sons and other relatives.

21. As regards oil matters an agreement was made at the end of November whereby the Bahrain Petroleum Company submitted itself to Bahrain income tax on all oil refined in Bahrain instead of paying import duty on crude imported from Dhahran in Saudi Arabia. This device increases the payments due to Bahrain slightly, without going beyond the fifty-fifty principle. Although negotiations took place in the spring between the Political Resident, on behalf of the Ruler of Bahrain, and the Saudi Government on the sea-bed boundary between Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, no effective result has yet been derived from them.

22. As regards development the new Manama power station came into operation in July. Because, however, of unexpectedly heavy demands for power in Manama, mainly for air-conditioning, the station cannot yet supply the outlying villages, although the supply lines to these have been erected. There was also some trouble over the use of the Bahrain Petroleum Company's gas in the engines which will be put

right in time for next year. Work on the land end of the deep water pier at Jufair has continued. The dredging of the deep water channel from Sitra to where the new pier head will be in the Khor Qalaia is being successfully carried out. The relaying of the main runway at Muharraq airport has been completed. The new runway—2,500 yards long—came into use in September. It is up to the heaviest weights.

23. A traffic code was introduced in June after some early difficulties of application.

Qatar

24. Over the year the Ruler's position has strengthened. He has governed by consent in the sense that before taking any decision he has taken advice widely. Often his decision has only reflected the advice which he has taken, and often too when he has been unable to reconcile different contending parties he has used his wealth to sweeten the party which would otherwise be disgruntled by his decision. But in spite of this apparent weakness there has never been any question about the final decision being his nor have there been any attempts by sections of the Ruling Family or by any class of people to undermine or whittle away his authority. The respect and affection which he has earned by his strict adherence to Islam and by his extraordinary generosity have contributed to the strengthening of his position. The rift over the succession between the Ruler and his sons on the one hand and the Beni Hamad on the other has not been healed, but has not deepened. The Darwish family have also exerted great influence. Jasim Darwish has had the Ruler's ear over all matters concerning religion and education. Abdulrahman Darwish has been in attendance on the Ruler though perhaps more as a master of ceremonies than as an adviser, while Abdulla Darwish has overshadowed both and has, so to speak, been the Ruler's "Minister for Western Affairs." Their influence and wealth have aroused hostility, both among members of the Ruling Family, in particular the Beni Hamad and Beni Ahmed, and among merchants. To counter this they have reduced their commission as buying agents for the Government from 8 per cent. to 6½ per cent., they have reduced the schedule of rates which they charge when building for the Government, they have encouraged the Government to put building contracts out to tender, and since the Government

have done so they have obtained few contracts, and they have done nothing to obstruct the Government from purchasing their requirements locally from merchants in Doha instead of purchasing them from abroad and through themselves. Abdulla Darwish, to a far greater degree than any other Qatari, understands what is going on in European minds. He has not been afraid of employing Europeans in his own business nor of seeing them employed in the Government, nor has he been afraid of making agreements with British firms if the agreements have been to his or Qatar's advantage. He has used his influence to bring about one agreement between the Government and Cable and Wireless Limited covering the operation and future expansion of the telephone system in Qatar, and a second agreement between the Government and International Aeradio Limited providing for the operation of Doha Airport by the company. The Qatar Income Tax (Amendment) Regulation, 1955, which enables oil companies in Qatar to claim income tax relief, was passed with the minimum of delay and this was entirely due to him. In these ways we have benefited from Abdulla Darwish's shrewdness. But the coin has had another side. Throughout the year he has made the worst of the actions of the Qatar Petroleum Company. It seems that his policy has been to convince the Ruler that the Qatar Petroleum Company always try to avoid giving the Ruler his due, and that only he, Abdulla Darwish, is astute enough to prevent them. Following this policy he has pulled out the Qatar Petroleum Company's laurels from under them before they have had time to sit down on them, let alone rest.

25. The Government machine has grown in size and measures have been taken to make it run more smoothly. The credit for this must go largely to Mr. Hancock and in some measure to the Ruler and Abdulla Darwish. The trend has been for the Adviser to carry out the general policy required by the Ruler rather than for him to advise the Ruler on the policy. His position has come to resemble that of a permanent Under-Secretary more closely than that of a Minister. The achievements of the State Engineer's Department have been considerable. A new Fort and Police Headquarters have been completed; most of the work on the new airstrip has been done; work on the new £3 million hospital which is due for completion by the end of 1956 is up to schedule in spite of delays in

the arrival of materials due to the dock strike; plans for a sewage scheme for the western half of Doha have been completed and part of the scheme has been installed; a start has been made on the replacement of stone and oiled roads in Doha by concrete and bitumen ones; the first stage of the water supply scheme has been completed; this has brought water to within 300 yards of every house in Doha and has entailed the piping of water from three different well-fields some 15 miles away and the installation of distillation units capable of producing 90,000 gallons a day; and finally a flood protection dam 2 miles west of Doha had reached a sufficient level by the 12th December to hold back 25 million gallons of rain water which would otherwise have coursed through and destroyed the new commercial centre of the town. The expansion of education has been rapid. The number of masters has jumped from 28 to 47 and the number of boys from 630 to 850. Some 400 adults have been attending night schools. An artisans' training centre has been completed but had not opened by the end of the year because of difficulties in finding instructors. The department has been controlled by a committee of Qataris whose chairman has been Jasim Darwish.

26. A strike occurred amongst the workmen of the Qatar Petroleum Company on the 3rd August. At Dukhan a British police officer with a handful of policemen tried to get back two vehicles which had been taken by strikers. The strikers resisted, the police officer was knocked out, and some rifles were lost. The strike spread to Umm Said and the Acting Commandant of Police ordered the police at Umm Said to avoid getting involved because he judged that if there were a fracas between the police and Qatari strikers then the Ruler would support the strikers rather than the police, who were almost all not Qataris. Subsequently the Ruler did not come down on the side of the police over the incident at Dukhan and the Acting Commandant's decision was thereby proved right; but in the meantime the police had made no attempt to control rioting strikers at Umm Said and in the course of the day the strikers had interfered with vital installations and in particular with the power plant. After the strike pressure was put on the Ruler to support the police against rioters even though they were Qataris; orders were issued to the police that they must defend vital installations and must use whatever

force was necessary to do so; new equipment, batons, shields, helmets, and tear gas, was imported, so as to enable the police to use force against rioting Qataris without doing the damage which must result from the use of rifles; agreement was reached that a wing of Qatari irregulars should be added to the police in the hope that the Ruler would find it less invidious to use them against rioting Qataris than his other non-Qatari police; and by the end of the year a few men had been picked for this wing. Whether or not these measures will enable police to curb rioters in future, the failure of the police at Umm Said in August remains the one serious breakdown of the Government machine this year.

27. In November when Mr. Loombe, of the Bank of England, visited Doha a request was made that the Government might buy up to £2 million worth of gold. The main reason for this request was the Ruler's wish to have in Qatar something which would enable him to purchase the essential supplies for the country in the event of another war. During the same visit the Government raised the subject of an Investment Board for Qatar and though they did not make any concrete proposals they gave the impression that they might do so in 1956.

28. While the Shell Company of Qatar Limited have had disappointments, on balance they have had a satisfactory year. In the technical field they have completed the gravimetric and geophysical surveys of their concession area. These surveys have led them to think that the most promising parts of their area are, firstly, near Halul, and secondly, to the north-west near the boundary between the Bahrain and Qatar sea-beds. They have drilled a hole some 50 miles north of Doha and some 5 miles off shore to the depth of 6,700 feet without finding oil. The drilling rig has since been modified so as to enable it to work in greater depths of water, to drill to a depth of 12,000 feet, and to enable helicopters to land on it. These modifications were completed by Christmas and the rig reached its next site some 18 miles from Halul on the 30th December. Shell have had no strike this year nor any serious labour troubles. Technically the Qatar Petroleum Company have had a satisfactory year. By the 30th November, 4,800,539 tons of oil had been exported. A new oil horizon was found below the main horizons in the Dukhan oilfield which may increase the reserves by some 10 per cent. to 15 per cent. The company's industrial relations have

been less satisfactory. In August Qatari drivers at Dukhan sent an anonymous letter to the management demanding the removal of two clerks in the transport office. They did not give reasons for their demand and did not sign the letter. The demand was rejected. The drivers then struck and after the clash between them and the police referred to above the rest of the workmen struck too. The strike lasted only one day, but while agreeing to return to work the next day the workers addressed demands to the Ruler and said that if they did not obtain satisfaction they would strike again. They demanded in particular certain improvements in their amenities, the removal of certain members of the supervisory staffs, the application of the principle of equal pay for equal work regardless of whether the worker came from abroad or was a Qatari and a review of wage scales to ensure that wages paid by the company were in line with those paid by other oil companies in the Persian Gulf. These demands were addressed to the Ruler, and for this reason and because the company could not disregard his wishes since they were dependent on him for the preservation of public security, it fell to the Ruler to decide what concessions the company should make. As a result of the concessions there was no further strike at the time nor has there been another since. In the field of political relations, too, the year has not gone smoothly. The most important question at issue was whether the company would conclude a new price agreement following the same pattern as the agreement between the Iraq Petroleum Company and the Iraq Government. After procrastination by the company an agreement was finally signed on the 25th September. The outstanding point of the agreement was that the company agreed that the border value of oil exported after the 1st January, 1954, should be the "arm's-length price" and should not be the "arm's-length price" reduced so as to take into account reductions necessary to secure long-term sales contracts. The value of oil exported after the 1st January, 1954, was thereby increased by some 16s. a ton. As against this the Ruler agreed to the company's deducting incentive discounts from the border value at the rate of 7½ per cent. on exports of oil in excess of 5 million tons a year and 10 per cent. on exports in excess of 7 million tons. As the year has ended two decisions have been taken which should make for better relations in future. Mr. Ensor, the general manager, has decided to accept the loan of a house in Doha from

the Government and as a result he will move from Dukhan to Doha in February 1956. Secondly, it has been decided to hold regular fortnightly meetings between Abdulla Darwish and the Adviser on one side and the general manager on the other. The first of these decisions should enable Mr. Ensor to get a better understanding of the Ruler's approach to any problem and the second should result in the business between the Government and the company being dealt with more expeditiously.

29. Interest in international affairs has become more widespread. There have been a number of reasons for this. The number of educated people in Qatar has increased with the influx of officials, skilled craftsmen and traders in particular from the Levant. The number of wireless sets has increased with the increase in wealth and in the supply of electricity, and many people have made a habit of listening to all the Arabic news broadcasts every day. People of importance in the Arab world have visited Qatar; in particular the King of Saudi Arabia visited Doha in January, and Colonel Anwar as Sadat visited Doha in March and again in December. Finally, whereas in the past international affairs have concerned places far from Qatar, with the reoccupation of Buraimi they have concerned places and people near at hand and known personally by Qataris themselves. The reaction to international affairs may be described briefly and accurately by saying that it has closely reflected the reaction in Saudi Arabia. The only exception to this is the important one that the protection which Her Majesty's Government afford to Qatar (as opposed for instance to Jordan) is still appreciated and there has been no evidence of any wish to alter the treaty relationship or to get rid of the British officials in the Government. As regards the dispute between Saudi Arabia on the one hand and Abu Dhabi and Muscat on the other, the Ruler and other responsible persons have taken the line that while their sympathies lie with Saudi Arabia they are friends of Her Majesty's Government and are neutral; but so long as the dispute continues they find their position embarrassing, and they hope that the dispute will soon be ended. On the lower plane Qatar's relations with Bahrain have possibly improved owing to the reception which Shaikh Ahmed bin Ali received when he returned from the Lebanon in August, while their relations with Abu Dhabi have not. Both Abu

Dhabi and Qatar have claimed islands lying between them, in particular, Halul. These conflicting claims, combined with the Qataris' sympathy for Saudi Arabia, have, and could only have resulted in relations being strained.

Trucial States

30. The past year has been characterised by an absence of internal dissension and a consequent awakening of interest in the possibilities of improving conditions in the Trucial States. The presence of the Trucial Oman Levies encouraged Rulers to eschew force as a means of settling their internal disputes and removed the fear of outside aggression. Family intrigues and conspiracies against the Rulers—so common in past years—have been rare. Only in Dubai was there serious trouble, which led to the banishment in May of the Ruler's brother, Shaikh Juma bin Maktum, and three of his sons. The Rulers have continued to meet in the Trucial Council and on various social occasions with evident cordiality towards each other and they appear distinctly more friendly, and less suspicious of each other than in the past. Throughout the year they have continued to bring their problems to the Political Agent and have discussed their needs and difficulties with him. Because of the Ruler's lack of administrative experience and the absence of reliable, educated men in the Trucial States, the agency has become involved in advising on administrative improvements in the States, both as regards policy and execution. All Rulers, with the Shaikhs of Abu Dhabi, Umm al Quwain and Fujairah less enthusiastic than the others, have become interested in developing their States, in carrying out certain rudimentary reforms, and in improving the conditions of their people—though the interests and prosperity of the Rulers themselves are still invariably put first. Their interest has been stimulated by Her Majesty's Government's Development Programme for the Trucial States, which included the search for fresh water and the appointment of an agricultural adviser to start a small experimental farm in Ras al Khaimah, and by reforms in the law courts and Customs Department initiated by the Ruler of Dubai. The shaikhs and their peoples are travelling more widely than before and are beginning to understand and desire the improvements which they have seen in Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar. Lack

of revenue has, however, prevented all but the Ruler of Dubai from making any improvements. This is a problem of considerable concern to the agency, for, while most Rulers would prefer to accept aid from Her Majesty's Government, some of them will not hesitate, if that aid is not forthcoming, to accept the assistance of any country which is ready to provide what they need. Few, if any, of the Rulers are sufficiently experienced to see the full implications and consequences of accepting such assistance. The Ruler of Sharjah, most active in his desire to improve his State, is also most active in the search for outside help. After an extensive tour of the Middle East during the summer, he returned with promises of continued aid for his schools from Kuwait, and with new promises of help from Egypt and Syria. The Rulers of Ajman and Ras al Khaimah, though less energetic, have also considered approaching Egypt for financial help if Her Majesty's Government cannot meet what they consider to be their minimum requirements. In June Dubai and Sharjah received offers of help in their development projects from the representative of a Saudi Arabian firm. Meanwhile, the poverty and backwardness of the Trucial States have scarcely altered. Without the discovery of oil, and without external aid, none of the States, with the exception of Dubai and the possible exception of Abu Dhabi, can become a viable economic unit, with even an elementary developed Government. A political officer was appointed to Abu Dhabi in September with the task of encouraging the Ruler to turn his thoughts to setting up an elementary Administration, which in time could deal with problems which would be created by the discovery of oil in his State.

Buraimi

31. As in 1954, the Buraimi dispute overshadowed all other foreign relations problems of the Trucial States, although Abu Dhabi was the only State directly concerned. The early months of the year were taken up with collecting material for the memorial to be presented to the Arbitration Tribunal in July. Throughout this period the Saudis repeatedly violated the terms of the Arbitration Agreement and more and more evidence emerged of Saudi bribery and intimidation. In June the Saudis suffered a reverse, when Shaikh Mohammed bin Salamin al Shamsi and

lesser shaikhs of the Dhahira, after a visit to Sharjah, travelled to Muscat to re-affirm their allegiance to the Sultan. Shaikh Hazza and Shaikh Zaid, brothers of the Ruler of Abu Dhabi, went to Geneva at the end of August to give evidence before the Arbitration Tribunal, which opened its hearings early in September. It subsequently became clear that Saudi Arabia was attempting to upset the arbitration by tampering with the tribunal and Her Majesty's Government eventually decided that the only course left was to restore the *status quo* which existed before the Saudi incursion in 1952. On the 26th of October the Trucial Oman Levies and the forces of the Sultan of Muscat reoccupied the oasis. The operation was accomplished with a minimum of fighting and bloodshed. The Saudi police detachment was immediately evacuated, and the renegade shaikhs of the oasis were allowed to travel with their families to Saudi Arabia, forfeiting absolutely their property and their rights to return. A company of the King's Royal Rifle Corps had meanwhile been flown in from Libya as a reserve at Sharjah, subsequently garrisoning Tarif and patrolling from there. The outstanding problem created by the reoccupation of Buraimi was that of reviving an economy which had existed for three years on injections of Saudi bribes, in return for allegiance, rather than productive work. Rehabilitation schemes, chief among which was the renovation of the "falajes" (the local water supply system), were set in hand at once after the reoccupation, and agricultural development and malaria control were planned. A meeting between the Ruler of Abu Dhabi and the Sultan of Muscat at Buraimi towards the end of December set the seal on the reoccupation of this area. In the west the Political Officer, Abu Dhabi, assisted the Ruler in establishing tribal posts in the Liwa in November. The modified Riyadh line, as declared to the Saudi Arabian Government on the 26th October, was patrolled by detachments of the Trucial Oman Levies and by Abu Dhabi tribal guards.

Dubai

32. During the period under review Dubai maintained and strengthened its position as the centre of trade and maritime communications for all the Trucial States. A great deal of new building was completed in the town, trade flourished and expanded, and confidence in the future was reaffirmed

by the decision to begin work as soon as possible on measures to improve harbour facilities in Dubai. After a series of meetings and much canvassing, the merchants finally raised a 4 per cent. loan of nearly 4½ lakhs, which will be paid back by the Ruler, out of his customs revenue, over ten years. It is hoped that exploratory work financed out of these funds will start in 1956, and that the money required for the actual harbour works will be forthcoming from elsewhere in the Gulf.

Sharjah

33. The dissident factions in the Ruler's family have now settled permanently in Saudi Arabia, where they intrigue from a distance and act as agents for the Saudi Government. The Ruler's relations with his uncle, Mohammed bin Saqr, seem to have improved considerably. The Ruler himself was away from Sharjah from July until October, visiting the Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt. He returned via Iraq and Kuwait. One of his main interests is education, and he secured a few places for the future both in Al Azhar University and in a Syrian college. His school in Sharjah, which was built by Her Majesty's Government, is mainly staffed by teachers supplied by Kuwait and these were augmented in November by two teachers provided by Egypt. The Egyptian Government have also promised doctors and technical experts. Shaikh Saqr is seriously short of money, but has many ambitious schemes for Sharjah which he would like to put into effect. At considerable expense he has already built a short jetty from Layya point and this, through the natural action of the sea, has greatly improved harbour facilities there. He hopes to extend this jetty a considerable distance out to sea and to construct a causeway over the creek, and thus provide reasonable landing facilities to compensate for the silting up of Sharjah creek.

Abu Dhabi

34. A political agency was opened in Abu Dhabi in September by the Hon. M. S. Buckmaster, Political Officer, working under the general supervision of the Political Agent, Dubai. The hopes that oil would be discovered have come to nothing and at the end of the year the Petroleum Development Company, Trucial Coast, had stopped operations at Gezira preparatory to moving to a new site.

Ras al Khaimah

35. Like the other Jawasim Ruler, Saqr of Sharjah, Saqr of Ras al Khaimah is seriously short of money. He has benefited in the past year from eight successful water bores being completed in his territory, which in time should provide for substantial agricultural development.

Trucial Council

36. Two meetings of the Trucial Council were held, in August and November respectively. The main items discussed were internal reforms and improvements within the States, and development projects financed by Her Majesty's Government. Education, Traffic Regulations, Nationality Laws, Jurisdiction, Control of Arms, Suppression of Narcotics and other related subjects were discussed with varying degrees of interest.

Development

37. Under the 1955-56 grant, the water drilling programme in Ras al Khaimah was completed and eight successful bores were sunk in the Kharan plain and one deep bore in Dhaid, the property of the Ruler of Sharjah. The rig was returned to the United Kingdom in August. In all, seven pumping sets have been supplied for these bores, though not all of them have yet been installed. Mr. R. Huntington was appointed Agricultural Adviser in September and provided with a Landrover, equipment and funds for labour and seeds. He started field trials on an experimental plot at Ras al Khaimah in October, and visited other Trucial States to advise on agricultural improvements and on "falaj" (water supplies) improvements, for which funds had been provided under the Development Programme. An arrangement was also made and funds provided for Mr. Van Ollenbach, the Agricultural Adviser to the Bahrain Government, to pay regular visits to the Trucial States, to assist Mr. Huntington. The El Maktum Hospital was the other beneficiary from the development grant and a plan was drawn up to provide adequate electricity for the hospital and staff houses. Certain new equipment was ordered and two new houses were built by Shaikh Rashid of Dubai, for the new Indian doctor and the lady doctor, for which he was subsequently refunded from the development grant.

Frontier Survey

38. From January to April, Mr. J. F. Walker, Assistant Political Agent, made a thorough survey of the internal frontiers of the Trucial States. His report and recommendations were submitted to the Foreign Office, though it was decided that no decisions should be published until the Buraimi dispute had been settled. Mr. Walker also compiled maps of hitherto uncharted areas.

Trucial Oman Levies

39. The Trucial Oman Levies carried out their role efficiently and well throughout the year, and proved, as before, to be the most important factor in maintaining security and peace among the tribes of the area. Their presence prevented any outbreak of raiding or banditry.

Muscat

40. Until the reoccupation of the Buraimi Oasis and the ousting of the Imam (October and December respectively) there were few outstanding events during the year, which passed mostly in unspectacular consolidation in the Ibri area and the gradual strengthening of the Sultan's armed forces. The policy of encouraging, but without untoward inducement, adherents of the Imam to rally to Muscat was pursued and bore fruit in a number of cases. Planning for the material progress of the country was again put off "until oil is found." The promise of oil has not yet, however, been fulfilled, although by the end of the year the American concessionary company (Cities Service Ltd.) operating in the province of Dhofar had drilled to about 10,000 feet on the first of the five best sites selected, before abandoning it. Petroleum Development (Oman) Limited were still engaged in transporting heavy equipment to the Fahud area, where the first rig was being assembled.

41. Following the ratification of the Treaty with India early in 1954, the first Consul of India, Shri Girdhari Lal Puri, arrived in Muscat on 28th February, and soon after took over the notarial and other functions previously exercised by the British Consul on behalf of the Government of India. In March the Sultan exchanged letters with Her Majesty's Consul-General agreeing to the extension of the Civil Air Agreement for a further period of four years as from 31st December, 1954. The insistence of the Government of Pakistan upon

the cession or lease of the Gwadar enclave has been met by the Sultan's refusal to cede this territory in any form except on his own terms. By the end of the year little progress had been made in negotiations, except to obtain his agreement in principle to a form of lease-cum-sale at a price probably higher than Pakistan would agree to pay. But it would appear that he has accepted in his mind that he must sell in the end, and that at least is an advance upon his original insistence that he could only lease, and in a manner which retained some tangible evidence of his sovereignty. The task of effecting a settlement is made no easier by Pakistan's belief that Her Majesty's Government's relations with the Sultan permit them to browbeat him in the same manner that Pakistan might treat one of their Indian Princes. There was a period of somewhat strained relations with two of the Rulers of the Trucial States owing to tribal and border disputes. In April a party of some 200 Mahra tribes of the East Aden Protectorate tore down the Muscat flag flying over the Sultan's frontier post at Habarut in Dhofar. Members of the same tribe likewise attacked an American geological survey party at Darbat Ali, but without harming the party on account of the vigorous defence put up by the Sultanate escorts. The frontier in those regions is ill-defined and efforts are being made by the Aden and Muscat authorities to concert measures for its demarcation.

42. With the return of the Sultan to Muscat on 20th February, after a two-year absence in Salalah, and until his departure on 30th April, the capital witnessed the influx of a large number of tribal leaders to pay their respects and, incidentally, to collect the presents customary on such visits, a custom which is largely responsible for the Sultan's protracted sojourns in Dhofar. These personages are known to have been well satisfied with the treatment accorded to them on this occasion. In the course of these visits the Sultan was able to effect satisfactory settlement of the difference between himself and the Yal Wahibah over the question of the oil prospecting north of Duqm near their territory. The Sultan also received calls from some Shaikhs of the Trucial Coast, including the Shaikh of Fujairah and Shaikh Zaid of Abu Dhabi. Shortly after his return to Salalah, the Sultan left, on 2nd July, by sea for England, whence he returned on 10th August by air after calls at Bagdad and Bahrain. The Sultan was well pleased with his reception

in London, which included luncheon with The Queen. He was also delighted with his reception in Bagdad and Bahrain, and seems likely to have lost some of his aversion to public appearance in the process.

43. The work of building up the Sultan's armed forces continued in 1955. Although for various reasons recruiting was delayed, a new training camp has been set up near Ghobra, some twenty miles from Muscat, and the numbers in training there were just over 100 by the end of the year. A small force is also being recruited and trained in the neighbourhood of Salalah for service in Dhofar. The forces have been strengthened by quantities of supplies, in particular transport, from the United Kingdom through the War Office and civil sources, all paid for by the Iraq Petroleum Company as an advance against future profits. This has made for greater mobility and fire power, thereby permitting participation of the Field Force in the Buraimi operation and, also, the carrying out in the second half of December of decisive action against the Imam. Reports of Saudi gun-running to Central Oman were current for most of the year and led to a tightening up of security measures at frontier posts and a regular search of vehicles and caravans proceeding to the interior. In June a large quantity of arms and ammunition was stated to have been discharged from a Saudi armed launch in the vicinity of Sib and subsequently smuggled to Khodh *en route* for the interior. An armed demonstration before Khodh led to the surrender to the Muscat authorities of some 400 old British-made B.S.A. and Lee-Enfield rifles dated 1899 to 1909, in mostly unusable condition, by the Shaikh of Khodh, through the mediation of the Sultan's Wali of Boshar, a relative of the former "Imam" Mohammed bin Abdulla el Khalili. Nevertheless the opinion prevails that the surrendered arms were but a small proportion of the total. Previously several bags of ammunition dated 1914 to 1915 had been seized by the Muscati authorities at Sib. This ammunition, which was mixed with dates was, like the rifles, old and in poor condition, and both rifles and ammunition are probably those which have been circulating in the Gulf for years to wherever the demand might be.

44. Following indisputable evidence that Saudi Arabia was keeping neither to the letter nor to the spirit of the Buraimi Arbitration Agreement, this was denounced by Her Majesty's Government acting with

the consent and on behalf of the Sultan and Shaikh of Abu Dhabi. The Buraimi Oasis was reoccupied on 26th October by Trucial Oman Levies in conjunction with forces of the Sultanate. A few days later Dhank, about half-way between Ibri and Buraimi, was occupied by Sultanate askars. As a result of the Buraimi operation, immense quantities of written evidence of Saudi duplicity were laid bare. The documents seized likewise put beyond doubt Saudi efforts to suborn subjects of the Sultan and also to aid the Imam of Oman to obtain complete independence from the Sultan. The facts revealed by these documents had long been known to everyone on the spot and on his return to Dhofar from his visit to England, the Sultan decided that action to put a stop to these activities by securing control of the interior and to remove the Imam and his fellow-conspirators was imperative. Accordingly preparations were made to move upon the Imam's capital of Nizwa on the 15th December. Her Majesty's Government agreed that the Sultan's decision was wise and timely and granted him a small measure of support in the shape of air transport and some technical personnel. A squadron of the Trucial Oman Levies was held in readiness to support the Muscat forces if necessary. Two squadrons of the Muscat and Oman Field Force approached Nizwa on the night of the 14th December and occupied it the following day; only one shot from an outpost was encountered. There were no casualties on either side and the Sultan's political planning of this *coup* had clearly been most successful. But the Imam himself, who had vainly tried to rally his followers, absconded on the night of 14th December as soon as the Muscat and Oman Field Force was observed to move to its "jumping off" positions. He was later stated to have resigned the "Imamate" in disgust, and to have withdrawn to his native village of Sait, where he was discovered by his fellow tribesmen and taken to a house in Ghafat belonging to the head shaikh as a political prisoner. Meantime his brother Talib was reported to be holding out at Rostaq against a diversionary move made by a section of the Batinah Force. This force later occupied Rostaq after the Beni Ghafir tribe, friendly to the Sultan and hostile to the Beni Hinah, had invested it, only to find that Talib had fled. All *foci* of resistance collapsed and messages of allegiance, many coupled with expressions of rejoicing, were

received in Muscat and Nizwa from every quarter. It soon became evident that the tribes as a whole had never taken to the new Imam and that, but for three characters, Suleiman bin Hamyar, Salih bin Isa, Talib, and their few followers, everyone was opposed to inviting the interference of their former Wahabi aggressors, and the late Imam, before he died, had, at the time of Turki's appearance in Buraimi in 1952, indeed voiced the sentiments of the whole country when he asked the Sultan to lead them to drive the Saudis out. Thus the end of the year saw the entire area of the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman again united and, consequently, in a better position to embark upon an era of progress and development.

45. Economically the country seems in the last year to have benefited by its larger date crop, and also by the very low prices of Pakistani rice, of which more has been available than in previous years, and by the regular remittances to their families of Muscatis who have found gainful employment abroad. The British Middle East Office were able to lend the services of Mr. Jack, their animal husbandry expert, to visit the Sultan in Dhofar for a week. He was able to prepare a useful assessment of the cattle and ghee industry in Dhofar and made several practical suggestions for its development and also for the start of poultry farming. The Sultan accepted the offer of a mobile clinic to be presented and financed for two years by Her Majesty's Government for use in the interior of Oman. It is hoped that this will arrive early in the New Year. He has also gratefully accepted a gift of £25,000 worth of munitions. In addition to the clinic the Sultan has decided to appoint a medical officer at his own expense to be stationed at Nizwa and has approved a second medical officer for the field force whose duties are to include treatment of the tribal people in their neighbourhood. The difficulty at present is, however, to find the doctors. The Sultan agreed to a scheme for the improvement of the water supply in Sur. No customs duty is levied on water pumps imported for use in wells, and some 200 are now said to be in use in the Batinah. With the prospects now of opening the easier Wadi Samail route to Nizwa, the more expensive Khaburah project is likely to recede into the background. The route via the Wadi Jizzi to Ibri is now safe from tribal interference and the difficult portion through the Wadi has been slightly

improved. Aden Airways run a regular weekly service from Aden via Salalah to Dukkam. They show signs of extending their service to Fahud and it seems now not a far cry to a link-up between them and Gulf Aviation from Bahrain via Sharjah and Muscat which, with the Sultan's increasing tendency to stay at least every summer in Dhofar, will prove a very great asset. Some renewed interest has been shown by mining firms in the possibilities of finding other minerals than petroleum in the Sultanate, and the Sultan granted a licence to Lieutenant-Colonel Gerald de Gaury (one-time Political Agent at Kuwait) to farm a concession to some reputable British firm for the Batinah and Masirah Island. In the latter place some promising samples of copper ore are said to have been found. Petroleum Development (Oman) Limited have extended their geological surveys very considerably and are now anxious to examine the whole of the Dhahirah up to Buraimi, also the neighbourhood of Sur and Ras al Hadd and the Wadi Adai behind Muscat.

I have, &c.

B. A. B. BURROWS.

Enclosure

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF EVENTS IN THE PERSIAN GULF, 1955

KUWAIT

January

- 24 Visit of Sir Paul Sinker, K.C.M.G., C.B., Director-General of the British Council, to investigate the possibility of opening a British Council Centre in Kuwait.

February

- 19 Mr. Majd-ud-Din Jabri returned to Kuwait and was reappointed by the Ruler as Chief Engineer of the Kuwait Government.

March

- 2 First visit to Kuwait of Colonel Anwar Sadat, member of the Egyptian Government.

May

- 19 Arrival of the British Council Representative to open a Centre in Kuwait.
26 Shaikh Abdullah al-Mubarak banned a meeting called by the local clubs to elect representatives to present a petition to the Ruler asking for a representative Government.
31 Three weekly newspapers ceased publication after being placed under censorship by order of the High Executive Council.

June

- 15 Mr. G. W. Bell, C.B.E., succeeded Mr. C. J. Pelly, C.M.G., O.B.E., as Political Agent.
17 Resignation of Mr. Majd-ud-Din Jabri, Chief Engineer of the Kuwait Government. Mr. C. R. Birdwood was appointed Acting Chief Engineer.
20 Death of Sayyid Abdullah Mulla Salih, M.B.E., Kuwait State Secretary.

July

- 4 Shaikh Sabah as-Salim As-Sabah, brother of the Ruler and President of the Police Department, left for his first visit to Europe and the United Kingdom.
17 First public cinema opened in Kuwait.
27 Agreement signed between the Government of Kuwait and Cable and Wireless Limited by which the Kuwait Government were to take over the telephone and telegraph systems by the beginning of 1956.
28 The Ruler told the Political Agent that the five British Contractors would be allowed to tender for new work once their affairs arising out of their "cost plus" works had been settled.

August

- 17 King Saud spent a few hours in Kuwait on his way back to Saudi Arabia.
18 Mr. William Dodd Brewer succeeded Mr. Harrison M. Symmes as United States Consul in Kuwait.
20 The Ruler told the Political Agent that, owing to doubts amongst Kuwaitis about the wisdom of leasing territory to Iraq near Umm Qasr, he wished to postpone for the time being signing the Umm Qasr or the Shatt-al-Arab Agreements which had been prepared in draft.
22 Arrival of Saudi delegation in the Neutral Zone headed by Turki bin 'Ataishan. This delegation later withdrew.
30 The High Executive Committee ordered that the Manual Workers' Charter should come into force with effect from July 1.

September

- 17 The arrival of Muhammad al-Ghusni in the Neutral Zone as Saudi-appointed Governor with a party of fifteen retainers.
30 Mission to Kuwait of Mr. Struthers of the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation to decide on work required to make existing airport runways safe for Viscounts.

October

- 8 Opening of the new Mylrea Memorial building at the American Mission Hospital.
Official opening of Kuwait Education Department Central Kitchen.
11 Revised oil agreement signed at the Political Agency by the Ruler on behalf of Kuwait, and by Mr. Southwell, on behalf of the Kuwait Oil Company; representatives of the owning companies had signed previously at Beirut.
19 The former Political Agent, Mr. C. J. Pelly, C.M.G., O.B.E., returned to Kuwait to work for the Government.

November

- 1 Publication of the first number of *Akhbar al-'Usbu'*, a new weekly newspaper.
7 Visit of the Commander-in-Chief of the East Indies Fleet in H.M.S. *Gambia*.

December

- 17 Return of Colonel Anwar Sadat to Kuwait for second visit.

BAHRAIN

January

- Government Committee appointed to enquire into the working of various Government departments.
Establishment of Public Relations Department by Bahrain Government.
Introduction of a contributory pension scheme for Government employees.

February

- High Executive Committee announced intention to establish a trades union comprising all classes of workers and employees. As a result of this Bahrain Government decided to draw up a Labour Law with British advice.
The Committee, through the Political Agent, sent a memorandum to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on his way through Bahrain. The memorandum criticised the Bahrain Government and claimed recognition of the Committee as representing the people of Bahrain.
President Bayar of Turkey visited Bahrain on his way to Pakistan.
Successful boycott of Manama municipal elections by the High Executive Committee.

March

- The Secretary of State's reply to the High Executive Committee's memorandum advised co-operation with the Government, refused recognition of the Committee as a representative body and warned against the use of violence.

April

- Dispute between Arab telephone subscribers and Cable and Wireless Limited over new telephone charges. One-third of the total number of subscribers asked for their connections to be cut off as they would not pay the new rates.
Ruler gave £157,500 from his private purse to be spent on educational and health projects and on the police.
King Hussein of Jordan passed through Bahrain.
The High Executive Committee dropped its demand for recognition by the Bahrain Government and co-operated with the Government in the drafting of a Labour Law.

May

- Colonel Nasser, Prime Minister of Egypt, passed through Bahrain, returning to Egypt from the Bandoeng Conference.

June

- Establishment of a Labour Office and Employment Exchange by the Bahrain Government.
British Information Office opened in Bahrain.
Ruler's two elder sons left on a visit to the United States and Britain.

July

- The telephone dispute was settled by the Ruler agreeing to pay the difference between the new and the old rates—the subscribers continuing to pay the old rates.
Bahrain broadcasting station opened.
Expression by the High Executive Committee of opposition to the proposed Penal Code.

August

- Sultan of Muscat passed through Bahrain returning to Muscat from Britain.
Entry into force of Penal Code postponed by Bahrain Government because of the possibility of strikes and disturbances engineered by the High Executive Committee.

September

- Ruler entered into private discussions with certain members of High Executive Committee about reforms.
New runway (2,500 yards long) at Muharraq airport brought into use.

October

- Registry of Patents, Trade Marks and Designs began work.
Ruler agreed to establishment of three committees, each half nominated, half elected, to supervise departments of Public Health and Education and to supervise the work of the various municipalities in Bahrain.

November

- About 2½ lakhs of rupees were collected for "Arms for Egypt" fund with the support of the High Executive Committee. The Ruler's family contributed.

December

- Colonel Anwar Sadat, Egyptian Minister without Portfolio and Secretary of Islamic Congress, passed through Bahrain on his way from Qatar to Kuwait.

QATAR

January

- 26-31 Visit of King Saud.

March

- 4 Visit of Colonel Anwar as Sadat.

August

- 3 Strike of Qatar Petroleum Company Workmen and failure of State Police to control rioters.

September

- 25 Final signatures put to new price agreement between the Ruler and Qatar Petroleum Company.

October

- 27 News of reoccupation of Buraimi published.

December

- 15-17 Second visit of Colonel Anwar as Sadat.
16 Qadi appeals in Mosque for contributions to "Arms for Egypt" fund.

TRUCIAL STATES

January

- 4 Hon. I. T. M. Lucas arrived to take over duties of Assistant Political Agent. Mr. J. F. Walker started work on his survey of the internal frontiers.
14 Opening of Sharjah School—a gift from Her Majesty's Government.
15 Visit of H.M.S. *Flamingo* to Dubai under command of S.N.O.P.G.-designate, Captain Vere Wight-Boycott, O.B.E., R.N.
24 Interception of Al bu Shams gun-running camel train.

March

- 2 Visit by Mr. J. C. Eyre, of B.M.E.O., to advise on agricultural development.
16 Visit by Dr. Melville Mackenzie of Ministry of Health, with Dr. Grant of Bahrain Government Health Department, to investigate plans for the development of the Dubai Hospital. Ruler of Sharjah shot at from Dubai watch tower when entering after dark.
18 Mr. A. A. Acland arrived to take up duties as Assistant Political Agent.

April

- 3 Visit by H.E. the Political Resident to Abu Dhabi to discuss Halul and other problems with the Ruler.
8 Visit of Shaikh Saqr of Sharjah to Saudi Arabia.
Visit of Political Agent, accompanied by the Assistant Political Agent, to Muscat.
16-20 Visit of H.M.S. *Loch Insh* to the Trucial Shaikhdoms.
Completion of Frontier Survey by Mr. Walker.
Pakistani team took over field work from Mr. Platt of Desert Locust Survey.

May

- 12 Arrival of Mr. J. P. Tripp to take up duties as Political Agent.
14 Exile to Saudi Arabia of Shaikh Juma and three of his sons by Shaikh Rashid.
16 Departure of Mr. C. M. Pirie-Gordon, O.B.E., Political Agent since May 1953.

June

- 8-13 Visit of Dhahira Shaikhs to Sharjah en route to Muscat.
Visit of H.E. the Political Resident to Dubai and Sharjah.
22-23 Visit of U.S.S. *Valcour* to Dubai.

July

- 9 Fire in Hamasa.
Shaikh Saqr bin Sultan left Sharjah for a tour of the Middle East.

July

- 19 The President of Indonesia, Dr. Soekarno, stopped at Sharjah en route for Cairo. Her Majesty's Government's gift of relief stores for fire destitutes despatched to Hamasa.
22-23 Visit of H.M.S. *Flamingo* to Dubai.

August

- 23-24 Seventh Meeting of the Trucial Council.
24 Meeting of the El Maktum Hospital Committee.
30 Shaikhs Hazza and Zaid, accompanied by the Agency Arab Assistant, Ali Bustani, leave for Geneva.
31 Arrival of Mr. R. Featonby, Administration Officer.

September

- 7 Departure of Mr. R. F. Coleman, Administration Officer.
Visit to Fujairah of H.M.S. *Loch Lomond*.
20 Mr. L. W. Huntington, Agricultural Adviser, starts work at Ras al Khaimah on experimental field trials.
21 The new Agency in Abu Dhabi opened by the Hon. M. S. Buckmaster.
Return of Shaikhs Mana'a bin Mohammed, Sultan bin Surur and Khalifa bin Yusuf to Abu Dhabi, after giving evidence before the Buraimi Arbitration Tribunal in Geneva.
25 Serious fire in Dubai.

October

- 2 Distribution in Dubai of relief goods withdrawn from Hamasa.
8-12 Visit to Dubai and Ras al Khaimah of Mr. A. Van Ollenbach, Agricultural Adviser to the Bahrain Government.
21 Return of Shaikhs Hazza and Zaid to Abu Dhabi from London, Cairo, Bagdad and Bahrain.
22 Arrival of Dr. de Souza at El Maktum Hospital.
26 Reoccupation of Buraimi.
29-30 Visit of H.E. the Political Resident to Dubai and Buraimi.

November

- 5-8 Visit of Mr. Van Ollenbach to Buraimi and Beni Ka'ab area.
8 Eighth meeting of Trucial Council.
10-12 Visit of His Honour Judge Haines.
12 Visit of H.M.S. *Owen* to Abu Dhabi.
19 Arrival of Dr. (Miss) T. Samuel, appointed to the staff of El Maktum Hospital.
19-23 Visit of Mr. M. Gale, First Secretary (Commercial), Bahrain.
21 Visit of U.S.S. *Duxbury Bay* to Umm al Quwain.
24 Return of Mr. J. F. Walker, Assistant Political Agent.

December

- 3-5 Visit of Mr. Lees, Director of Public Works, Bahrain, to Dubai and Sharjah, to advise on schemes of improving harbour facilities in both places.
6-7 Visit of Sir Dallas Barnard, Bart., Chairman of B.B.M.E., and Mr. Musker, Managing Director.
9-12 Visit of Mr. Nambiar, of Bahrain Government Medical Service, to Buraimi.
10 Mr. J. F. Walker recalled to take up duties in Residency, Bahrain.

December

- 10-11 Visit of H.M.S. *Owen* to Abu Dhabi.
28 Departure of Shaikh Rashid bin Said, Regent of Dubai, to Persia for a hunting trip.
28-29 Visit of H.H. the Sultan of Muscat and Oman to the Buraimi Oasis. Shaikh Shakhbut, Ruler of Abu Dhabi, exchanged calls with His Highness.

MUSCAT

January

- 2-4 Visit of French Corvette *Chevreuil*.
6-8 Ceremonial visit by H.M.S. *Flamingo*.
11-16 H.E. the Political Resident, accompanied by Brigadier Baird and Her Majesty's Consul-General, Muscat, visit Sultan at Salalah. Her Majesty's Consul-General returned via Duqqam, Ibri and Khaburah on January 21.

February

- 2-13 Her Majesty's Consul-General—visit to Sultan at Salalah.
5-8 Ceremonial visit of Indian Naval Training Ship *Tir*.
20 Return of the Sultan to Muscat.
28 Arrival of first Indian Consul.

March

- 6 Civil Air Agreement renewed for four years from December 31, 1954.
14-15 French Consul, Basra, called to deliver letter of introduction from French President to Sultan.
28 to
Apr. 1 Official visit of H.E. the Political Resident.

April

- 4-11 Major Belson, Major Roberts and two N.C.O.s visit for inspection of equipment delivered to Muscat Government by Her Majesty's War Office for expansion of their forces.
9-12 Political Agent and Assistant Political Agent, Trucial States, visit Muscat. Former called on Sultan.
12-14 Ceremonial visit of U.S.S. *Valcour* (Rear-Admiral Smith).
21-28 Visit of United States Consul-General from Dhahran.
30 Sultan left for Salalah.

May

- Mazam incident (attack on Baluchis by Field Force).
12 Sultanate frontier post at Aswad attacked by tribesmen from Ras al Khaimah.
19 *Loch Killisport*—ceremonial visit—vessel left same day to succour tanker in distress.
23 Her Majesty's Consul-General left for Salalah via Bahrain for discussion with Legal Adviser and Sultan of the "Buraimi Memorial."

June

- 12 Return of Her Majesty's Consul-General from Salalah via Bahrain. Sunaina occupied by detachment of Field Force.
17 Report of landing of arms from Saudi armed launch near Sib.

July

- 2 Sultan left Salalah by sea for England.
7-10 *Loch Insh*—ceremonial visit.
13 Shaikh Sulaiman bin Hamyar visits Muscat for first time in seven years. Calls on Her Majesty's Consul-General.
Two Saudi Arabian subjects in possession of suspiciously large sum of money arrested by Shaikh Abdullah bin Salim of Mahadhah and sent to Muscat.
14-16 Arms smuggling through Sib (later confirmed by documents found in Buraimi and statement of Imam's Akid in Nizwa). Quantity of rifles surrendered by Shaikh Mubarak bin Umair of Khodh. Very old British Army pattern, mostly unusable. Probably circulating in Persian Gulf for years.

August

- One Egyptian and two other Egyptians or Saudis reported in Nizwa, and to have delivered 100 rifles and three lakhs of rupees to Imam.
10 Sultan returned to Salalah from England by air after calls at Bagdad and Bahrain.

September

- 11-13 *Loch Lomond*—ceremonial visit to Muscat; also visited Sohar.
Sultan authorised construction of road from Ras El Hadd to point 2 miles north-east of Gomela, where post of askers to be established. Road constructed but use opposed by tribes.

October

- 13-16 Consul-General and Brigadier Baird visit Sultan at Salalah to obtain agreement to plan to occupy Buraimi if Arbitration Agreement denounced.
26 Buraimi Oasis reoccupied and Arbitration Agreement denounced and Sultan's Wali appointed for his villages. Ahmed al Self of Al bu Shamis in Hafit, a supporter of the Saudis, defected to Sultan as a result of this operation.
Dhank occupied.
29 H.E. the Political Resident and Minister for Foreign Affairs, Muscat Government, visited Buraimi.

November

- 12-17 Consul-General visits Bahrain via Buraimi.
17-19 *Loch Killisport*—operational visit to Muscat after Salalah, where calls exchanged with H.H. the Sultan.
28 Salim bin Humaid appointed Sultan's Wali of Dhank.
29 to
Dec. 1 Visit of Commander-in-Chief, East Indies Station.

December

- 7-9 H.E. the Political Resident visits Sultan at Salalah.
15 Operation against Nizwa opens. Fall of Nizwa.
19 Fall of Rostaq.
20-23 Acknowledgment of Sultan by all tribes of Muscat and Oman.
21-23 Sultan's journey by motor-car from Salalah to Nizwa.
24 Consul-General, Muscat, flown by Royal Air Force to call on Sultan in Nizwa.
26-28 Sultan's journey—Nizwa to Buraimi.

EA 1017/18

No. 5

SITUATION IN KUWAIT

Sir Bernard Burrows to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received June 1)

(No. 55. Confidential) Bahrain,
Sir, May 28, 1956.

I have the honour to report on some of the conversations which I had with the Ruler and others and on some general impressions which I received during my recent visit to Kuwait from 20th to 24th May.

2. The Ruler, though suffering for part of the time from a recurrence of the gout, was more alert and vigorous in conversation than usual, and spoke on a variety of topics, other than those concerning the internal administration of his State, in a more open and forthcoming manner than I have noticed in the past.

3. The Ruler was much interested in the progress of our discussions with Saudi Arabia and I gave him a full account of the preliminary conversations which Mr. Dodds-Parker had at Riyadh and of our proposals for the agenda for the next round. The Ruler made it clear that he did not have any sympathy for the Saudi claims to Buraimi and did not think we should be justified in making any sacrifices there, particularly as the oasis did not belong to us but to the local Rulers. He recalled that during the visit of King Saud to Kuwait in 1954 he had urged moderation and settlement by direct discussion and he said that he would always be ready to use his influence with other Arab Rulers in order to secure a just and honourable settlement of this and other matters. He would act in this manner not in order to show favour to us but in support of the right course or solution as he objectively saw it. Bearing in mind Mr. Riches' letter EA 1053/7 of March 23, I took advantage of this opening to speak more generally of our policy in the Middle East and particularly of our hope of restoring our ancient friendship with Saudi Arabia, the unnatural character of the present close relationship between a revolutionary movement in Egypt and a traditional monarchy in Saudi Arabia, the evil effects on the Arab world of the difference between Egypt and Iraq and of our feeling that while we wished to be on good terms with all the Arab States, it appeared that for the time being

we had to begin with those who were willing to be on good terms with us and to support the same objectives, *i.e.*, Iraq. The Ruler expressed a surprising degree of agreement with these views, though he was sceptical of the possibility of detaching Saudi Arabia from Egypt. He thought that the Saudis were still motivated by an unreasonable fear of Iraqi intentions to reconquer the Hedjaz and he doubted the possibility of rapprochement between these two countries while the Hashemites ruled the one and the Al Saud the other. The trouble with Egypt as regards the Bagdad Pact was mainly jealousy that she did not have the leadership of it.

4. With particular reference to the Buraimi question, the political situation in Aden and the Aden Protectorate and the attempts of Egyptian and Saudi propaganda to resuscitate the Imamate of Oman by giving prominence to the ex-Imam's brother and to Saleh bin Isa al Harthi, the Ruler complained strongly and repeatedly of the inadequacy of British propaganda. He said that anti-British comments and news items were being broadcast repeatedly on these and other topics from Egypt and Saudi Arabia and we hardly ever replied or stated our own point of view. In these circumstances doubt was bound to enter the minds even of our genuine friends and supporters. He intimated that his own position of general support for our policies was made more difficult by the absence of clear and repeated statements available to local listeners of our policy and point of view. He mentioned as one example of comparatively successful British propaganda the treatment by Sharq al Adna of the expulsion of the British Locust Mission from Saudi Arabia and he was apparently surprised that so much attention had been given to this compared with other more important items. The Ruler's feeling appeared to be that it was not enough for us simply to make an announcement of the facts when an event occurs and then leave the facts to speak for themselves in the face of biased versions from elsewhere, but that we must go on repeating our story and explaining our point of view even if we had

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nothing particularly new to say for at least as long as the subject was being treated by the opposition; in other words there must be a more or less equivalent volume of broadcasting from our side to what there was from the other side. I think the Ruler would also feel that the tone of some at least of our broadcasting effort on these subjects should be more vigorous and polemical than it now is. I undertook to transmit His Highness's remarks on this subject to Her Majesty's Government.

5. The Ruler naturally showed some concern over events in Bahrain. He was inclined to suggest that we were giving inadequate support to the Ruler of Bahrain, but he did not disagree when I explained that the general tenor of our advice to him was in favour of a gradual political progress and reform. His Highness made the further interesting and pertinent comment that ever since the time of Shaikh Isa the Rulers of Bahrain had unfortunately detached themselves from contact with the people; they had assumed airs of formality; the public Majlis of the Ruler had become a purely ceremonial occasion at which coffee was drunk and platitudes exchanged instead of an opportunity for free speech and comment between the Ruler and his people in the traditional Arab manner. I told the Ruler that in my view one of the most important lessons to be learnt from recent developments in Bahrain, and one which should be applied in Kuwait, was the importance of keeping the responsible merchants and senior elements of the middle class generally on the side of the Ruler and the Government. In Bahrain it was most noticeable and most regrettable that the merchants refused either to use their influence with the Ruler in the direction of a moderate and reasonable programme of progress and reform or to use their influence on the political movement to restrain any extremist tendencies and to persuade it to use constitutional methods. This attitude was partly the fault of the merchants themselves, but largely also that of the Ruler and the Bahrain Government who had failed to maintain contact, which they should have done both by showing themselves receptive to comments and even criticisms from the merchants and by keeping the merchants informed of the Government's policy and of the reasons for it.

6. The Ruler on more than one occasion made emphatic protestations of his loyalty to the relationship with us. Kuwait and the

United Kingdom were bound together in good weather and in bad. In the present state of affairs in the Middle East it was particularly necessary that there should be full understanding between us. In addition to his remarks about the deficiencies of our propaganda he also wondered whether we were prepared if necessary to take a firm enough line of action as regards attacks on our interests in the Middle East, *e.g.*, Aden, Buraimi and Bahrain. I warmly reciprocated His Highness's remarks about our relationship with Kuwait. I said that it was one of the fixed and cardinal principles of our Middle East policy to demonstrate in practical form our friendship for our friends, and notably for the Rulers of the Persian Gulf States. Our general principle was to try for so long as was possible the methods of diplomacy and negotiation in defence of our interests and those of our friends, but there was a limit beyond which such a policy became impossible and when that limit was reached we should be found ready to act with whatever strength was required. The Ruler agreed that this was reasonable.

7. Unfortunately the Ruler's agreeably vigorous attitude as regards external affairs is not reflected in his own handling of internal problems. There has been a marked tendency in recent months for more and more power to fall into the hands of Shaikh Fahad, who seems more actively bent than ever on increasing his administrative empire by taking over departments and activities which were formerly independent. This tendency is now coming to a head in a developing feud between the Public Works Department, which is one of Fahad's main spheres of activity, and the Finance Department, which operates directly under the Ruler. The Public Works Department has always refused to provide the Finance Department with budget estimates or to conform to proper financial procedure. They are now in the process of removing from the Finance Department the control of the appointments and terms of service of the Public Works Department British employees, whose contracts have hitherto been dealt with in the Finance Department. The Ruler had intended that the telegraphs and telephones, when handed over by Cable and Wireless, should be administered from the Finance Department. Fahad has, however, succeeded in assuming control of this administration. He is also extending his intervention in the affairs of the Electricity

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Department which has hitherto been controlled by one of the more efficient junior Shaikhs, and he is even beginning to deal with certain marginal oil company matters, whereas up to now all dealings with the oil company have been conducted by the Ruler and his own secretariat. One of the unfortunate results of this tendency is that the younger Shaikhs and senior Kuwaiti officials who formerly showed some administrative promise in the High Executive Committee (not to be confused with the political committee in Bahrain of the same name) have become discouraged and are standing aside and in some cases showing signs of indulging in a more dissolute way of life to make up for their administrative frustration. Another unfortunate result is that, owing to the presence in the Finance Department of Colonel Crichton, the senior British official in the Kuwait Government, and of Mr. Pelly, the former Political Agent, whom the Ruler brought into his service against Fahad's opposition, the Finance Department is tending to become regarded as a British preserve and Fahad may therefore direct partly at us any annoyance which he feels when the Finance Department attempts to restrain his administrative empire building or to control Public Works Department expenditure. Not too much should be made of this aspect of the matter, however, since there are still a number of British technical personnel in the Public Works Department whose work is appreciated both by Fahad and his Lebanese "Chief Inspector." It is becoming clear that personal qualities count for a great deal in the question whether or not a British official or technician can establish a useful position in Kuwait, and considerable discrimination is already being shown by Kuwaitis, both in the administration and outside, in their judgment on these officials. Those who are prepared to work with, and if necessary under, Kuwaitis or other Arabs and to accept a measure of adaptation to the peculiar administrative and political framework can establish a most useful position for themselves and obtain general respect and liking. Others who, from previous training and experience or from a natural unadaptability of character, deal with Kuwaitis and their problems so to speak from above or from outside will find less and less possibility of effective action.

8. Fahad is a bad administrator. His choice of personnel is apt to be unsatisfactory and he interferes continuously in

matters of detail. His confusion of thought on economic subjects is extreme and he is most unwilling to take advice or to be told the truth when it does not fit in with his preconceived and usually half-baked ideas. There is, however, nothing that we can do about this particular situation for the time being. Fahad's position is too strong for us to make a frontal attack on him. There is opposition to him from some elements of the merchant community but this does not yet appear to be very strong or organised. It is possible that he will overwork himself to such an extent that he may sooner or later have to give up some of his present functions, or at least stop acquiring new ones, but for the time being it is regrettably clear that he has to be accepted as one of the facts of life in Kuwait. The Ruler does not appear to be willing or able to stand up against him even in defence of the Finance Department which the Ruler has hitherto always regarded as his own particular concern. He seems to prefer to hand over responsibility for difficult decisions to the "Supreme Council," which consists of the Shaikhs in charge of departments and one or two other Shaikhs. No one other than members of the Ruling family has been appointed to this body and its main purpose is evidently to provide a possibility of ironing out differences between the Shaikhs before rather than after administrative action is taken and to ensure that so far as possible actions by the Ruler or the Kuwait Government are not specifically criticised or frustrated by individual Shaikhs who might otherwise feel that they should have been consulted beforehand or that their personal or departmental interests are infringed. While it is a pity that the composition of this council is not broader it nevertheless appears to fulfil quite a useful function. It has at the second attempt reached a comparatively reasonable position over the Iraq water scheme. It was brought, with a little difficulty, to acquiesce in the Ruler's signature of the Civil Aviation Agreement with us, and it is useful in providing a channel through which complaints by individuals can be dealt with or brought to the notice of the department concerned.

9. Colonel Crichton expressed to me some apprehension about the future course of Kuwait Government expenditure. This is expected to run in the current year at the rate of about £56 million. Colonel Crichton fears that in a few years' time, if there is no proper control and long-term

planning, and if in consequence two or three of the larger development works reach their peak of expenditure at about the same time, it is quite possible that with continually increasing expenditure on salaries and maintenance the total outgoings may reach as high as £100 million in a single year and therefore use up all the current revenue. He fears that the next step might be to begin using the reserves and that financial solvency would then be at an end. It is generally felt that this is too gloomy a view. Expenditure on the salaries of Government employees is certainly at a high and rising rate. It is equally true that each new development work that is carried out increases the annual maintenance charges but even the Public Works Department and Shaikh Fahad appear to accept that expenditure on new works should be kept at a stable level and there is some evidence that they are putting this thought into practice, e.g., by reducing the amount of new housing to take account of building requirements of other kinds. It is admitted, however, that if the Iraq water scheme becomes a practical proposition in the near future this will cause a temporary peak in development expenditure. The other large works in immediate contemplation, such as the port, the new hospital and the new airfield, are quite expensive but can on present form easily be met out of Kuwait's current revenue and contain a large proportion of once-for-all expenditure. Moreover

it is to be hoped that the large sums now being spent by the State on the acquisition of land for town planning or development purposes may begin to decrease over the next few years. It may well be necessary for us at some time to speak seriously to the Ruler and perhaps to Shaikh Fahad about the dangers of overspending but it would be preferable that we should not have to do so until we are clear whether we wish that large Kuwait balances should continue to be accumulated in London and until we know whether there is going to be an opportunity acceptable to Kuwait for investment in Middle East projects, e.g., the Syrian Oil Refinery which is now under discussion. If we were to advocate less spending now it would be taken to imply that we were merely interested in obtaining further Kuwait investment in British Government funds and this might expose us to damaging criticism both in Kuwait and the rest of the Middle East.

10. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Cairo, Bagdad, Jedda, Beirut, Damascus and Amman, to P.O.M.E.F., the Commander-in-Chief, East Indies, the Air Officer Commanding, Aden, and Her Majesty's Political Agents in Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar.

I have, &c.

B. A. B. BURROWS.

EA 1053/30

No. 6

CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND SHAIKH ABDULLAH MUBARAK

Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Sir Bernard Burrows (Bahrain)

(No. 68. Confidential)
Sir,

*Foreign Office,
June 4, 1956.*

Shaikh Abdullah al-Mubarak called to see me this morning. He stayed for about half an hour and the conversation was friendly throughout.

2. After exchanging compliments and expressions of friendship I congratulated the Shaikh on the recent anti-Communist operation in Kuwait and he emphasised that although war between the West and Communist Powers was now less likely the danger of underground subversion remained great. Shaikh Abdullah was obviously pleased and likened subversive activities in the State to germs entering the body; he emphasised that the enemies of Her Majesty's Government were the enemies of Kuwait and said that he would always receive warning of any subversive activities in Kuwait.

3. I expressed my regret that the Shaikh's visit should have coincided with the State Visit of the Queen to Sweden. Shaikh Abdullah showed no sign of being critical of the arrangements which had been made for him to meet the Queen Mother instead of the Queen and confined himself to expressing good wishes for the Queen's journey to Sweden. I suggested to the Shaikh that the impossibility of arranging a meeting with the Queen on this occasion would provide a good reason for an early return visit. Shaikh Abdullah said that he would always be glad to visit Britain.

4. I asked Shaikh Abdullah about relations between Kuwait and her neighbours and the Shaikh strongly emphasised the friendship between Kuwait and both Iraq and Saudi Arabia. He added that the Iraqis had assured the Ruler of Kuwait that there would be no difficulty about Kuwait taking all the water she needed from the Shatt al-Arab.

5. In reply to my question Shaikh Abdullah said that he was grateful to Her Majesty's Government for the high quality of the personnel who have been loaned to him.

6. Shaikh Abdullah mentioned the great value of visits being exchanged between Kuwait and Britain and suggested that I ought to take an early opportunity of visiting Kuwait: this would be a clear indication to all of the firm friendship and co-operation existing between Britain and Kuwait. I promised that I would do so on the next occasion that I went to the Middle East.

7. No mention was made by Shaikh Abdullah about difficulties and delays in the supply of arms from Britain for the Kuwait Army.

8. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Baghdad and the Political Agent at Kuwait.

I am, &c.

SELWYN LLOYD.

SECRET

EA 1053/62

No. 7

CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND SHAIKH ABDULLAH JABIR OF KUWAIT

Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Mr. Gault (Bahrain)

(No. 92. Restricted)
Sir,

*Foreign Office,
July 6, 1956.*

Shaikh Abdullah Jabir of Kuwait called on me this morning accompanied by his secretary; Mr. Dodds-Parker was also present.

2. After exchanging greetings I congratulated him on the expansion of education in Kuwait and asked about his plans for young Kuwaitis returning from education abroad. He assured me that the intention of the Kuwait Government was to have a definite job waiting for every Kuwaiti on completion of his education and that there was no question of these young men returning to a life of idleness.

3. When I enquired about the difficulty of finding suitable teachers, the Shaikh said emphatically that there were plenty of teachers available in the neighbouring Arab countries and in listing these countries he included Iraq.

4. While discussing the Shaikh's duties as a judge, I took the opportunity of asking him whether the law applied in the Ruler's courts was written down. He said that the law applied was the Ottoman Code known as the "Majallah" and he added that if the answer could not be found there, the judges relied on the Maliki school of Islamic law; this also, he said, was written down in the old law books.

5. I am sending a copy of this despatch to the Political Agent at Kuwait.

I am, &c.

SELWYN LLOYD.

SECRET

EA 1081/283

No. 8

CONDITIONS IN THE BURAIMI OASIS

Mr. Gault to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received July 17)(No. 80. Confidential)
Sir,*Bahrain,
July 10, 1956.*

During the eight months which have elapsed since the reoccupation of Buraimi, Her Majesty's Political Resident has often had occasion to refer in correspondence with your Department to particular aspects of the situation prevailing in the oasis: there has, in addition, been considerable correspondence between the Residency, the Political Agency at Dubai and the Consulate at Muscat on matters connected with Buraimi which seemed at the time of too detailed a character to be copied to the Department. I feel, however, that the prospect of our talks with the Saudi Arabian Government breaking down is now sufficiently imminent for it to be desirable to review developments in the area at somewhat greater length and it is for this reason that I now have the honour to report to you on a situation which I believe we shall have to bear carefully in mind in framing our tactics if we find ourselves before the Security Council.

2. It was clear from the outset that the reoccupation of the oasis and the restoration of the authority of the Muscat Government in the villages of Buraimi and Hamasa would give rise to a number of difficult political and economic problems. Four years of Saudi influence and Saudi money had transformed Hamasa from an insignificant hamlet of perhaps 800 souls into a prosperous community of nearly 3,000 inhabitants, almost all of whom were by inclination, interest or force of circumstance hostile to the Sultan of Muscat and Oman and the Shaikh of Abu Dhabi. Though the larger and older settlement of Buraimi had been successfully preserved during the period of the blockade of Turki bin Ataishan from passing under a similar measure of Saudi control, the opportunities of subversion which the Saudis had enjoyed during the two years of the arbitration had established a predominant Saudi influence there also. Because of the difficulties certain to arise after the military reoccupation, Sir Bernard Burrows arranged for Mr. E. F. Henderson, who had been working on the Buraimi Arbitration during the whole of the previous year and who had an unrivalled knowledge of the area, to be attached to the Trucial Oman Levy force as Political Adviser, and the Muscat Government were asked to make suitable arrangements to take over administrative responsibility for their sector of the oasis as soon as possible.

3. The immediate and inevitable effect of the reoccupation was to produce a very substantial exodus of population from Hamasa and, to a lesser extent, from Buraimi. Even before the last pockets of resistance in Hamasa had been reduced, many of those who had taken up temporary residence in the villages had removed themselves. We were, moreover, faced immediately after the reoccupation with the problem of what to do with the renegade tribal leaders who had fallen into our hands. It had been decided beforehand in consultation with the Department that it would be politically preferable to allow these men a choice of emigrating to Saudi Arabia or submitting to the Muscat Government, and our first difficulties with the Muscat Government arose when the Sultan objected to our implementing undertakings on this subject which had been given to Shaikh Saqr bin Sultan al Naimi of Buraimi, to Shaikh Rashid bin Hamed al Shamsi of Hamasa and Shaikh Obaid bin Juma al Ka'abi at the time of their surrender. These three tribal leaders in the end left under arrangements made by us for Dubai, and thence by launch to Saudi Arabia taking with them family and followers totalling some 180 in all. They were followed within a few days by perhaps another 150 persons who either expected short shrift from the Muscat authorities or who were drawn by the prospect of continuing Saudi bounty. The removal of any hope of Saudi subvention was no doubt a main factor in dispersing the large number of tribesmen who had swelled the villages' population to three or even four times their original size. In any case by early November the inhabitants of Hamasa had been reduced to a mere handful of perhaps 30 or 40 persons, and the population of Buraimi had also been considerably depleted though not to the same extent as that of Hamasa.

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4. In the months immediately preceding the reoccupation, Saudi tribal subsidies and pensions to individual persons in Oman had amounted to nearly £10,000 a month, a huge sum by local standards. No doubt a very large part of this largesse remained in the coffers of the Shaikhs, but enough of it filtered through to the ordinary villagers for the economic consequences of its sudden stoppage to be little short of disastrous. For two years money had in fact circulated on such a scale that the date gardens belonging to the pro-Saudi villagers went untended and the underground water channels (*falaj*) on which the villagers and gardens depend entirely had been allowed to silt up and fall into disrepair. In these circumstances the Political Resident felt that some form of subsidised public works programme would have to be undertaken both in order to alleviate the distress of the villagers and to accustom them again to the idea of working for their daily bread. Repair and cleaning to the *falaj* system was the task most obviously requiring attention, and Mr. Henderson at an early stage bent his efforts towards making this programme a joint effort which would cover both the Muscat and Abu Dhabi villages. Indeed, the geographical layout of the oasis in which the seven Abu Dhabi villages lie in a semi-circle around the two Muscat villages made it impossible to undertake a thorough overhaul of the system without the co-operation of the Muscat authorities.

5. The Muscat official who was sent to take over the administration of Buraimi and Hamasa was a certain Hamed bin Saud, who was already known to us as Wali of Sohar in the Batinah. As our experience had shown him to be reasonably intelligent and extremely co-operative his appointment was welcomed. As had been feared, the resources which he announced to Henderson on his arrival were decidedly meagre: indeed, he declared that he had only Rs.990 in his possession, and Mr. Henderson found it necessary to advance funds to him even to furnish and equip his office. Fortunately, however, there were other resources to hand. When Mr. Henderson had entered Shaikh Saqr's fort he had found in it treasure amounting to approximately five lakhs of rupees (£40,000). Mr. Henderson dissuaded the Wali from forwarding this large sum immediately to the Sultan, since it would clearly have been impolitic to have introduced any form of taxation of the villages at that stage, and, from experience of the habits of the Sultan's administration, it seemed in the highest degree improbable that finance would be forthcoming from the Sultan's own coffers to permit the execution of Muscat's share of the *falaj* improvement programme. From these funds, also, payments were made to some of the many tribal visitors who came to call on the Wali and on Mr. Henderson—an exercise which called for a nice balance between doles to the near-destitute but renegade inhabitants of Hamasa and rewards to Shaikh Zaid's loyal tribesmen. In the circumstances some such initial distribution was probably unavoidable, but when the news of it reached Ibri it had the effect of upsetting the Wali there, since he in turn found himself subjected to the importunities of his local tribes.

6. The new Wali arrived on the 30th of October—five days after the military operation. He established himself in Shaikh Saqr's fort and from that point onwards the process of sorting out of responsibilities between the two authorities began. It was decided that the Trucial Oman Levies should remain for a month in Hamasa to guard against any possibility of an upset, but that they should thereafter be withdrawn to Abu Dhabi territory.

7. Relations between Mr. Henderson and the Wali were excellent and co-operation was close but by the middle of November it had become evident that the authorities in Muscat were concerned at the extent to which the Wali was acting in concert with Mr. Henderson and independently of Muscat. Although instructions were issued to Mr. Henderson which would, it was hoped, remove any legitimate grounds for complaint, the Political Resident arranged that Her Majesty's Consul-General at Muscat should visit the oasis and subsequently come on to Bahrain with the Political Agent, Trucial States, and Mr. Henderson, so that the matter might be discussed.

8. Unfortunately, when Mr. Henderson got back to the oasis from this conference he found that the Wali, who had at that date spent some Rs.10,000 from Sultanate funds and a further Rs.20,000 from Shaikh Saqr's treasure, had been much concerned to receive orders from the Sultan (who, being at Salalah, had comparatively little idea of local conditions in the oasis and who knew nothing of the existence of Shaikh Saqr's treasure) that a sum of Rs.10,000 the Wali had

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received from the Sultan's treasury was to suffice for all his needs and that in no circumstances must his expenditure exceed this limit. The Wali had for this reason suspended all rehabilitation work, and Mr. Henderson found him perplexed and anxious for advice. Shortly afterwards the Wali was summoned to Muscat for consultation.

9. It was at this stage that the Political Resident received authority from the Department to incur expenditure on rehabilitation of the Abu Dhabi *falaj* system and he accordingly instructed Her Majesty's Consul-General at Muscat on the 27th of November to inform the Muscat Government of the effort Her Majesty's Government proposed to make to rehabilitate the Abu Dhabi part of the oasis and to impress on them the importance from their own point of view of making a similar effort with regard to Buraimi and Hamasa. He advised the Consul-General that in the last resort he had authority to use for the benefit of the Muscat villages part of the development grant which had been approved, but that he would find some difficulty in doing so while the Muscat Government diverted to their own coffers the large sums of money found in Shaikh Saqr's house. He therefore expressed the hope that the Wali would be given constructive and sensible instructions before his return to Buraimi. As a result of Major Chauncy's representations the Minister of the Interior did, in fact, on his own initiative authorise the Wali to spend Rs.10,000 on improvement of the water channels in the Muscat sector. He said, however, that though the Muscat Government might wish to make some arrangement with us to share in the provision of medical arrangements for the oasis, they would wish to assume direct responsibility for any necessary work in the Muscat villages. He made it clear that the decision for any further expenditure over and above the Rs.10,000 would rest entirely with the Sultan.

10. On the basis of this agreement some progress was made during December with the joint rehabilitation of the water channels. At the beginning of that month Henderson reported that owing to shortage of staff the Wali was having considerable difficulty in looking after the confiscated property and gardens of those who had taken refuge in Saudi Arabia. He also reported that Shaikh Zaid bin Sultan, the Ruler of Abu Dhabi's brother and representative in the oasis, who was away hunting, had before his departure encouraged Shaikh Mohammed bin Salamin, head of the bedu section of the al bu Shamis tribe, to move into Hamasa and establish himself as its Shaikh. Henderson considered this inadvisable and did his best to dissuade Zaid from the project. He further reported that the merchants of Hamasa had nearly all opened up shop in Buraimi but were doing little business and hoping that the missing population would begin to filter back. By the end of December some 60 at least of the refugees had in fact turned up in the oasis though in some cases Mr. Henderson considered there was room for suspicion whether some of these had not returned in the guise of Saudi agents.

11. On the 28th of December the Sultan himself visited Buraimi for the first time after travelling overland from Salalah to Nizwa, which had just capitulated to his forces. It had been arranged that the Ruler of Abu Dhabi should meet him there, and there is little doubt that on a personal plane the meeting was a success. It cannot, however, be said that the Sultan's visit did anything to promote closer co-ordination of the policies being pursued in the Muscat and Abu Dhabi sectors of the oasis. The Political Agent, Trucial States, found the Sultan "not much interested in rehabilitation . . . or in our proposals for the future," though he did agree to co-operate in anti-malarial work. The Sultan refused to inspect any part of his own territory in the oasis, and although Mr. Innes—his Minister for Foreign Affairs—tried to interest him in the *falaj* rehabilitation project, he subsequently reported that he saw little prospect of the Sultan agreeing to spend money in Buraimi on the scale proposed by Her Majesty's Government for the Abu Dhabi sector. The Sultan took the view that the inhabitants of his villages had collaborated with the Saudis and could not expect preferential treatment over the loyal inhabitants of Oman for whom very little had been done. The Political Agent, Trucial States, and Mr. Henderson pointed out to Mr. Innes the dangers of such a negative and punitive policy. The inhabitants had only been persuaded with difficulty to stay and it was obviously not to the Sultan's political advantage to have retaken an area whose population could be said at once to have fled from his control. Mr. Innes said that he appreciated this point, but could not promise that anything more would be done beyond the work already in hand. It was doubtful if the Sultan would agree to more money being spent on rehabilitation

than that found in Shaikh Saqr's treasury. Meanwhile the Arab assistant to the Political Agent reported that the people of Buraimi and Hamasa were pleasantly surprised by the Sultan's open, cheerful countenance and by his apparent simplicity (he travelled very sensibly in a Dodge truck). Their only criticism was that they had not seen very much of him during his stay and that they had received no largesse. This failure to scatter *ikramiya* was also remarked on by Abu Dhabi subjects and Shaikh Khalid, brother of the Ruler of Abu Dhabi, who was heard to observe: "If the Sultan continues with his close-fisted policy in Dhahira and Oman, he will again be hated by his subjects. Rulers should always be generous"—a remark which, as the Political Agent pointed out at the time, might very well have been addressed to his brother Shakhbut.

12. From the time of the Sultan's visit, and no doubt as a result of instructions which the Sultan had given on that occasion, Mr. Henderson found the Wali more difficult to do business with and less and less inclined to spend money. In order to spare himself the embarrassment of turning visitors away empty-handed Hamed bin Saud increasingly tended to shut himself up. Mr. Henderson reported that Shaikh Zaid was staying away from the oasis in order to avoid hearing complaints against the Wali. Mr. Henderson found himself pestered by various individuals such as Shaikh Mohammed bin Salamin, always a persistent beggar, whom the Wali had refused to see. At the beginning of February the Wali defaulted on payment of his part of the *falaj* work and Mr. Henderson found him evasive in dealing with proposals for restricting access to a series of openings which the villagers of Hamasa had made in the roof of the Jimi *falaj* during the period of Saudi occupation and which were leading not only to fouling of Jimi's drinking water supply but were, in Mr. Henderson's opinion, endangering the safety of the whole *falaj* owing to the amount of sand which they were allowing to accumulate in the water channel. There was also friction about boundary questions and the Arab Assistant to the Political Agent found the Wali tired and dispirited and talking of going to India for medical treatment. As a result of these disquieting reports, the Political Resident instructed the Consul-General, Muscat, to speak to the Sultan before he left Muscat on his return journey to Salalah. The Sultan reassured Major Chauncy that he had no intention of raising frontier issues at this stage nor of imposing customs on goods entering his part of the oasis. He had evidently heard of the difficulties over the Jimi *falaj* but was inclined to back his own official in the matter and to take the line that Mr. Henderson was occupying himself with a water dispute that should be left for settlement in accordance with Shari'a law.

13. The Sultan did not revisit the oasis on his return journey although he came up the Wadi Jizzi and must consequently have passed very close to Buraimi. The Wali went to see him at Ibri and when he returned it appeared that the Sultan's instructions had, if anything, stiffened his attitude over the disputed *falaj*. In view of this unsatisfactory situation, the Political Agent, Trucial States, visited the oasis by air on the 23rd of February and found that Mr. Innes had come up from Muscat on a similar mission. He reported that the dispute had become a personal issue between the Wali and Mr. Henderson, in which, unfortunately, Mr. Innes had also become embroiled. Since he felt that only harm could come out of continued recrimination he recommended, and the Political Resident subsequently approved, that Mr. Henderson should leave Buraimi as soon as he had completed all current work on the water channels with the exception of the disputed sections. Mr. Tripp said he was satisfied that the Wali's changed attitude to Abu Dhabi and to Mr. Henderson was the root cause of this unsatisfactory situation to which pro-Saudi sympathisers had contributed. It appeared reasonably certain that the Wali had on two occasions defaulted on agreements which he had made with Mr. Henderson and on this rather unpleasant note Mr. Henderson's mission in Buraimi ended.

14. At the end of February it appeared that in addition to this unresolved *falaj* dispute there was a number of other matters at issue between the two administrations. In spite of the Sultan's assurance to Major Chauncy only a few days previously that he had no intention of introducing customs, it was reported that the Wali had in lieu of customs introduced a levy of Rs.10 on all vehicles passing through Mahadha, a point in Muscat territory through which all road traffic from the Trucial Coast to any of the Buraimi villages must pass, and it appeared that this toll had been instituted as a result of the Sultan's express instructions, although vehicles belonging to the Abu Dhabi Shaikhs and official

vehicles were exempted. Other and lesser incidents contributed to the misunderstanding: the Wali had, for example, forbidden certain of Zaid's villagers to cut trees for charcoal in an area where they believed they had customary rights: there were other incidents over the arrest of three of the Trucial Oman Levies who had been visiting Hamasa, and the expulsion from Hamasa of a woman accused of consorting with Levies. At the same time, it was reported that the Wali had more than doubled the rate of taxation of articles being sold in the markets of Hamasa and Buraimi, and had included amongst the taxable commodities various items on which no levy had previously been made—a situation which seemed likely to stimulate smuggling from the Abu Dhabi villages with the further risk of incidents. The Political Resident therefore took advantage of a flying visit which he made to the Trucial Coast at the end of March to visit Muscat briefly, taking Mr. Tripp with him for a discussion of the situation with Major Chauncy, and it was then arranged that Shaikh Zaid and his brother Hazza should visit Muscat early in April with the Wali and with Mr. Buckmaster, the Political Officer, Abu Dhabi.

15. The talks which took place in Muscat in the second week of April were reasonably successful. A number of minor complaints were either dropped or cleared out of the way, and the Sultan subsequently approved proposals which had been made regarding the Jimi *falaj*. However, while the talks were actually in progress a rather garbled complaint was received through Muscat military channels to the effect that Shaikh Zaid had established three new posts in territory claimed by Muscat. This came as a surprise to everyone, including Shaikh Zaid, and as the information was too imprecise to permit of any useful discussion at the time, Mr. Buckmaster arranged to investigate this complaint on his return. It came, however, as something of a disappointment when on his return to the Trucial Coast Shaikh Zaid confessed to Mr. Tripp that he still mistrusted what he described as the misplaced zeal of the Muscat officials, including Sayed Ahmed, the Minister of the Interior, and said that, while he was willing to give the new arrangements a trial, he thought it might be necessary for him to appeal direct to the Sultan. The Consul-General, Muscat, commenting on this said he was certain that the Wali's actions were the implementation of the Sultan's own instructions to him and that it was not a case of mischief making or an excess of zeal on his own part. He agreed, therefore, that a personal visit by Shaikh Zaid to the Sultan would eventually be the best way of dealing with any outstanding matters, and he suggested that such a visit might conveniently be arranged when the Sultan comes to Muscat at the end of October. Mr. Buckmaster's investigation had revealed that Zaid's three posts were not new, but were, in fact, a continuation of patrols and other arrangements made during the Buraimi blockade. The sites are, perhaps, in areas to which Muscat tribes will lay claim, but although the Sultan appears to think that Zaid's patrols and posts are not in present circumstances necessary, there is little doubt that this question can safely be left until the autumn.

16. Meanwhile, the situation in the Muscat sector of the oasis remains a disquieting one. In the first place there is plenty of evidence that Saudi agents have been passing regularly between Buraimi and the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia and that sums of money are still regularly being paid by the Saudi Government to persons in the Muscat villages. Indeed, in April two of the recipients of such funds brought a dispute about equitable distribution to the Muscat Wali for settlement. Secondly, the welcome tendency of refugees to drift back into the oasis seems now to have been halted and even reversed. At the beginning of June 30 of Mohammed bin Salamin's followers were reported to have left by launch from Dubai for Saudi Arabia and at about the same date four of the Beni Jabir of Sua'araba arrived in Sharjah and asked the Ruler whether he would take them and their families under his protection since they wished to emigrate from the Muscat sector of the oasis. The immediate background to this particular incident seems to have been an attempt by the Wali's new Muscati tax assessor to assess and levy *zakat* on the crops growing in the gardens of the Beni Jabir, who are allies of Shaikh Zaid and the Al bu Falah if they are not in fact a sub-section of the Beni Yas tribe. Presumably the newcomer was attempting to levy tax at a higher level than the old tax official, who had been appointed year by year by the farmers themselves. At all events his entry into the gardens was opposed by armed men who said they belonged to Shaikh Zaid and would not pay tax to the Muscat Government.

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17. There appears no doubt, however, that even without the depredations of the tax gatherers, economic conditions in the Muscat villages are thoroughly unsatisfactory. In spite of Mr. Henderson's work on the *falaj* system, which is much praised by the inhabitants, the flow of water has sensibly diminished as a result of lack of rain this year, and it appears that this had had a disproportionately adverse effect on the palm gardens in the Muscat sector where, as a result of neglect during the four years of Saudi occupation and of the lack of labour since last year's exodus of the population, not more than 25 per cent. of the palm trees are reported to be healthy whereas those in the gardens belonging to the Abu Dhabi villages are practically all sound. Moreover, the Muscat Government has deliberately killed the trade which Buraimi and Hamasa had traditionally carried on with the Trucial Coast. There is a ban on the export to the Coast of charcoal, firewood, goats and local produce, and lorries coming up from the Coast are not only made to pay the ten-rupee toll but are prevented from continuing beyond Buraimi into the interior. The Muscat authorities have likewise done their best to ensure that travellers from the interior making their way northwards to find employment in the oilfields of the Gulf shall travel through Muscat rather than by the more convenient route through Buraimi to the Trucial Coast ports. When Mr. Buckmaster visited Buraimi recently he reported that as a result of these restrictions, trade had forsaken Buraimi which was a dying community, but that the *suq* in Shaikh Zaid's own village of al Ain was flourishing and contained as good a selection of goods as that of Abu Dhabi itself. The feelings of the inhabitants of the Muscat sector can perhaps be gauged by an old man whom Mr. Buckmaster met by the Sua'ara *falaj* who called out: "How can I join forces with Shaikh Zaid? Here we are dying a slow death."

18. The Wali has, since his visit to Muscat in March, been careful not to interfere in the Abu Dhabi affairs, and there have been no unfortunate incidents toward since that time, though the work on the Jimi *falaj*, though approved by the Sultan, has still not been executed (steps are being taken now to remedy this). Relations, however, between Muscat and Abu Dhabi halves of the oasis are far from happy, and Mr. Buckmaster reported that when he attended a party in the Muscat sector given for Colonel Waterfield—the Muscat Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs—no guests from the Abu Dhabi sector had been invited. Though we cannot, therefore, any longer complain of specific frictions between the two administrations, this uneasy peace has been largely produced by unnaturally separating the two halves of the oasis and sundering their normal economic ties. Moreover, it is clear that the Sultan is pursuing within his own two villages a punitive policy of neglect and strangulation of trade which is in complete contrast with the policy of rehabilitation which we have been endeavouring to pursue in the Abu Dhabi sector. It can be small wonder in these circumstances if the remaining inhabitants look back with regret to the period of the Saudi intrusion, when they were freely subsidised and when the Saudis provided a resident doctor to attend to their needs. This situation has been brought about as a matter of deliberate policy by the Sultan, who is, of course, only responsible for his own affairs; but in this particular case we are unfortunately under the obligation of defending his interests and therefore his actions internationally. Even if we wish to persuade him that his policy in Buraimi is wrong and, indeed, internationally indefensible, no opportunity of doing so may occur until he returns to Muscat at the end of October. In the interval we must bear in mind that if, as a result of discussion in the Security Council it were decided to send any sort of mission of inspection to the oasis, no objective observer could fail to draw the most unfavourable conclusions from the condition of the Muscat villages.

19. I am sending copies of this despatch to Jedda, the Political Office with the Middle East Forces, Washington, United Kingdom Delegation at New York, Cairo, Baghdad, the Political Agencies at Kuwait, Bahrain, Doha, Dubai and the Consulate at Muscat.

I have, &c.

C. A. GAULT.

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No. 9

THE HISTORY OF THE REFORM MOVEMENT IN BAHRAIN

Mr. Gault to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received August 24)(No. 90. Confidential)
Sir,*Bahrain,
July 31, 1956.*

I have the honour to enclose the translation of a speech⁽¹⁾ delivered by Abdulrahman Al Bakir, the Secretary of the National Union Committee of Bahrain, during his recent sojourn in Cairo. The speech has been published both as a booklet in Cairo, and as a supplement to the Bahrain newspaper, *Al Mizan*. There is hardly a sentence in it which is not either inaccurate or misleading or both.

2. I have been particularly concerned by the story of the growth of the Nationalist movement in Bahrain described in those paragraphs headed "Education," "Journalism," "The British in Bahrain," "Awakening of the Giant" and "The Story of the 'shaking off' by the People," because they give a totally false impression of the recent history of these islands, and in view of the inability of most Bahrainis to exercise critical discrimination even in a matter which should be so familiar to them, it might easily form the basis of a dangerous myth. On the other hand, it must be admitted that the speech does emphasise a fact which has sometimes been disregarded, that political discontent in Bahrain is not a recent phenomenon but has had a long and complex development. At any rate, Al Bakir's account has prompted me to have research conducted into the material contained in the political archives bequeathed to this Residency and to the Political Agency, Bahrain, by the Government of India, and as these records are not directly available to the Foreign Office, I now submit the results of this investigation, for which I am indebted to Mr. W. J. Adams, Third Secretary at the Residency.

3. I think, however, that I should preface this review with a few remarks about Abdulrahman Al Bakir himself.

4. Al Bakir told my First Secretary (Information) that his family were originally Baghdadi Jews who came down the Gulf and were converted to Islam. Nearly all the Al Bakir are now settled in Qatar and Abdulrahman was born of Qatari parents in Bahrain where he received his education. In 1948, the Ruler of Bahrain, against Mr. Belgrave's advice, granted him a Bahraini passport on the grounds of birth. His main domicile, however, until 1952 seems to have been Qatar, though there is no doubt that he has spent much of his life travelling from place to place in the Gulf, and has probably visited Kenya and Zanzibar, where he professes to have been impressed by the colonial policy of Her Majesty's Government as opposed to their policy in the Persian Gulf Shaikhdoms. He may also have visited Cairo for the first time during the war. He claims to have worked for the British on a contracting job connected with the Sharjah airfield during this period. I gather that he has always been interested in political movements in the Gulf and that he made an anti-British speech in Kuwait in 1951 or 1952. His recent involvement in Bahraini affairs dates from 1952 when he fled from Qatar. The story of that incident was related in the Qatar Monthly Diary for June 1952 as follows:—

"This occurred on June 7 when one of the Ruler's sons, Khalifa bin Ali, an unpleasant youth both physically diseased and mentally unstable, assaulted the Doha ice merchant, Abdulrahman Bakir, for refusing to sell him more than the Ramadhan ration, and dragged him off to the Palace. The Ruler refused to support his son, thrashed him publicly, and banished him to Saudi Arabia, where he is now undertaking a penitential pilgrimage. Abdulrahman Bakir, who is probably the most disreputable merchant in Doha, fled to Bahrain and the Ruler has forbidden him to return, thus ridding the country of two of its most troublesome characters at one stroke."

5. Al Bakir's career after this is well known since it is intimately bound up with the history of the present crisis, so I will confine myself to the salient points. After his ignominious departure from Qatar, he became an influential participant in the political club life of Bahrain and, as he implies, played a part in the attempt to unite Sunni and Shi'a discontent after the communal riots of September 1953,

⁽¹⁾ Not printed.

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an attempt which provided the initial inspiration for the foundation of the High Executive Committee movement itself. Later, Al Bakir became the Secretary and principal spokesman of the Committee. In March 1954, however, the Ruler, who had, not surprisingly, come to regard Al Bakir as one of the most sinister influences in the country, put pressure on him and obliged him to leave Bahrain for a while. In October of that year he returned, but was soon in fresh trouble, because the periodical *Saut Al Bahrain*, of which he was the editor, had published an anti-Saudi article which offended the Ruler. As a result of this his passport was confiscated by the Government, and henceforth Al Bakir was able to pose as an outraged patriot, deprived of his national rights. Indeed, this event was made the focus for the unification of Sunni and Shi'a agitators behind the Committee. Al Bakir continued to take a leading part in the movement, and was one of the principal organisers of the strike which the Committee organised in December 1954. He was personally responsible, as he claims, for the organisation of the taxi drivers' grievances, and the foundation of the popular insurance scheme known as the "Sanduq." He played a commanding role in all the agitation of 1955, but after the second strike of March 1956 was again asked unofficially at the behest of the Ruler to quit the country for a period, which he did with apparent willingness, ostensibly because he wished to take medical treatment in Beirut having quietly collected funds for the purpose both from the Bahrain Government and from the Ruler of Qatar.

6. A few days after his arrival in that city, however, he moved on to Cairo where he has remained until just recently. His public utterances in Egypt have been consistently anti-British and have closely followed the Egyptian pan Arab line. On the other hand, in conversation with British officials both in Bahrain and in Cairo, he has always professed to value the British connexion as a vital safeguard for the Bahraini people both internally against the inertia of the ruling family, and externally against the ambitions of Saudi Arabia and Iran. There is in fact good reason to believe that despite Al Bakir's public servility to Egypt, he has in the past been by conviction a moderate, and that he has generally exercised a restraining influence on the National Union Committee. There will soon be an opportunity of seeing whether this assessment is still true, for last week he left Cairo for Beirut and Damascus and is expected to return to Bahrain early next month.

7. I regret that I have not been able to discover much about the early history of education in Bahrain, and cannot, therefore, say much about Al Bakir's statements on that subject. The files are not very helpful and in fact the Political Agent in Bahrain wrote to the Political Resident in 1938: "I am unable to trace much correspondence in the past with regard to education here."

8. One or two points have emerged, however. The Shaikh Hafidh (Hafiz) Wahba, whom Al Bakir describes as having been compelled by the British to leave Bahrain, is identical with "Mulla Hafiz," an Egyptian schoolmaster and agitator expelled by Shaikh Hamad for his complicity in the Sunni intrigues of 1923. This man later entered the service of Ibn Saud, and is now, of course, the Saudi Ambassador in London.

9. In 1927 the Government did, as Al Bakir relates, take over education under the nominal direction of Shaikh Abdulla bin Isa. I do not think, however, that the previous condition of education can have been so desirable as Al Bakir would have us believe, for I have found several references to "the disgraceful old days of the Board of Education" which suggest that the state of affairs prevailing before 1927 were a source of dishonest profit to some persons.

10. There is, however, no doubt that the Syrian ("Lebanese") Director of Education who held sway in the 1930's was a most unpopular figure since one of the demands of the agitators in 1938 was for his removal.

11. Al Bakir's remarks about the treaties concluded between the Government of India and the Al Khalifa are slightly more accurate than most of his observations. Nevertheless there is, so far as I can see, no mention of the confiscation of forts, guns and boats in the 1820 treaty. Moreover, the terms of the 1861 treaty are quite different from those mentioned by Al Bakir, though one of his clauses (2) covers more or less the same ground as Article 4 of the treaty which deals with most favoured nation privileges, and the right of British subjects to be tried by the Political Resident. The 1880 treaty does contain articles which are substantially the same as the first two clauses of Al Bakir's version, though what he quotes as the third clause of that treaty (about the Ruler not disposing of any part of his territory except to the British Government) is taken from the 1892 revision.

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12. Unfortunately the archives are discontinuous and disappointingly uneven, and this has inevitably influenced the balance of my narrative to some extent. I think it can, however, be safely said that the internal political history of Bahrain from 1921 to the present day falls into six quite clearly defined stages:—

- I. The crisis of 1921–23, culminating in the deposition of Shaikh Isa.
- II. The foundation of “the Bahrain Government” (1923–30).
- III. A period of comparative tranquillity marked by the discovery of oil (1930–35).
- IV. A period of renewed agitation with two separate outbreaks in 1935 and 1938.
- V. Fifteen years of political inactivity but mounting dissatisfaction (1938–53).
- VI. The present crisis (1953–56).

13. At the outset I must point out one particularly gross error in Al Bakir's speech. Whenever he mentions the date 1912, which occurs in the Arabic versions of both the Cairo and Bahrain editions, he means, or should mean, either the period (1921–23) or 1923 itself. Nothing relevant occurred in 1912 and the events he links with that date took place a decade later.

14. The principle of British interference in cases of chronic misgovernment in Bahrain was stated as early as 1869 when as a result of the internal unrest resulting from the murder of the Ruler, Shaikh Ali, the Government of India considered themselves bound “to prevent grave outrage or oppression by the Ruler, or at any rate not to remain unconcerned spectators of such acts of violence, but rather to use their influence to repress them.”

15. The embarrassments that were liable to ensue from our alliance with the inefficient and tyrannical Al Khalifa were recognised by the Political Resident, Major Cox, when he wrote in March 1905: “I do not see how we can expect anything but periodical trouble from a continuation of our laudable attempt to carry on the government of the Islands through the rule of a chief (Shaikh Isa bin Ali) who has shown himself to possess few, if any, of the qualifications necessary for the maintenance of order, the security of persons and of trade.”

16. It appears, however, that in fact most of our interventions in Bahrain's affairs during the first two decades of this century were for purposes of protecting non-Bahraini traders, British, German, Persian, &c., and not in order to shield the Ruler's subjects from the violence of his rule.

17. Violence and discontent appear to have been a constant feature of the modern history of Bahrain. As long ago as the 7th of May, 1839, the Political Resident, Captain Hennell, wrote in a despatch to the Government of Bombay: “. . . the aboriginal or Sh'ia inhabitants (generally known as the Baharna) who are an unwarlike race but who, smarting under the oppressive conduct of their Utubi (Al Khalifa) masters, would gladly see the downfall of that tribe.” It is difficult to say why matters came to a head in 1921, though certainly conditions had degenerated fast in the immediately preceding period.

18. Despite the long-established nature of this discontent, however, I am convinced that there was a definite crisis in the year 1921, and that the “Bahrain situation” was not, as some people have later implied, “discovered” by the resolute Major Daly (later Sir Clive Daly) who arrived in the islands as Political Agent in that year.

19. Major Daly quickly summed up the situation in a series of urgent communications to Bushire. According to his analysis the Ruler, Shaikh Isa, was by no means the most sinister member of the Al Khalifa. “Shaikh Isa's wife,” he reported, “holds a regular court and imprisons and punishes at her will with a total disregard of the most elementary laws of even Arab justice. The Salifeh diving court has degenerated into a single venal judge owing to Shaikh Isa having become deeply indebted to Rashid bin Mohama . . . a disturbing element is the rapid increase of the family of Al Khalifa. There is no outlet for the many younger members and no attempt is made to educate them for any occupation.”

20. Major Daly also reported that terrible oppression was practised on the Baharna by the Al Khalifa, and especially by the able and immoral Shaikh Abdulla bin Isa who had his father's and mother's complete confidence and consequently ruled Bahrain.

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21. In his despatch of the 8th of January, 1923, to the Political Resident, Major Daly listed the following factors as the main reasons for the oppression and discontent:—

“A.—The great increase of wealth of the ruling family owing to the improved customs service and to seizure of property from the Baharna.

B.—The increase of power to oppress as a result of A.

C.—‘The events of late years in Iraq, India and Egypt which have been closely followed and a greatly increased tendency of the inhabitants to travel and consequent enlightenment of their leaders.’

D.—‘The repressive policy of the Rulers, who are more ignorant and less travelled than the majority of their subjects and have taken no steps to educate the cadets of their family.’

E.—‘The influence of newspapers, which since the war are imported in considerable numbers from Egypt, India, Iraq and Persia and which have given rise to ideas of democracy completely opposed to the antiquated and autocratic rule of the Shaikhs.’

F.—The influx of foreigners during the pearling season.”

22. I would also mention the fact that the Sunni were virtually immune from taxation which was borne entirely by the Baharna. As we shall see, however, many of the sources of discontent were inherent in the social structure of Bahrain.

23. Shaikh Isa had enough wit to realise that the situation had entered a stage of unusual difficulty and in 1921 he voluntarily and spontaneously gave his son, the mild and pliable Hamad, full executive powers and retired into the background, whence he could intrigue until conditions were favourable for his re-emergence. In fact, his indirect tyranny continued, while his wife and Shaikh Abdulla made Hamad's regency a mockery.

24. In December 1921 the Baharna villagers presented the first of their petitions to Major Daly, and in March 1922 the Political Resident, Lieutenant-Colonel Trevor, visited Bahrain to deliver a rebuke and warning to Shaikh Isa.

25. At about that time another Baharna petition was presented to the Political Agent calling for:—

- (1) The abolition of *sakhra* (forced labour);
- (2) The provision of an adequate and sanitary prison;
- (3) The forbidding of members of the ruling family other than the Heir Apparent to try cases or inflict punishments;
- (4) The issue of written summonses for appearances in Court, in lieu of the practice of suddenly arresting the required defendants and witnesses.

26. Despite Lieutenant-Colonel Trevor's warning, the Al Khalifa continued in their evil ways. The young Shaikh Salman bin Hamad (the present Ruler) is noted as being particularly oppressive in the Courts. Shaikh Abdulla bin Isa soon broke his promise to co-operate with his brother Hamad, and amongst other things stirred up intrigue against his brother in the Persian and Egyptian Press. Moreover, some of the Sunni tribes, notably the Dawasir, the unruly allies of the Al Khalifa, delivered a series of brutal attacks on Sh'ia villages, such as Barbar and Aali. Foreign Arab agents were not slow to take advantage of the anarchy, and in May the Sunni-Sh'ia struggle in Bahrain gained a temporarily international significance, when Nejdi merchants, led by Abdullah Al Qusaibi were involved in brawls with Persian merchants under the command of Yussef Kanoo. This is no doubt the incident referred to by Al Bakir when, after describing the arrest of certain agitators, he states: “This action caused the public to show indignation and they emphatically demanded that they should have a say in the administration of the affairs of their country. The British realised that it would not be to their advantage to agree to this demand. They therefore arranged that foreigners should create disturbances, whereupon the British interfered openly.”

27. The Political Agent, Political Resident and the Government of India were not prepared to tolerate this chaos for long. On the 17th of May, 1923, the Political Resident again visited Bahrain and obliged Shaikh Isa to abdicate in favour of Hamad. Soon afterwards, Major Daly received a letter of gratitude from the Baharna community signed with 328 signatures, and a letter of complaint and

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condemnation from certain Sunnis led by Abdul Wahab Zayani, described by Al Bakir as "the leaders of the Nationalist Movement at that time," and later the same group delivered a remarkable petition for a National Parliament.

28. This astonishing document, of which Al Bakir gives a garbled version, ran as follows:—

"We, the undersigned leaders of tribes, *Ulama*' and Traders state:

'In view of the state of affairs in our country and our honour and rights we are resolved that the Great Government is just and will not agree to the besmirching of the honour of Muslims and will not approve of what Major Daly is doing to cause ill feeling between us and the High Government and to break the good relations between us, and that she will uphold right if demanded of her, and therefore we publish our requests which are as follows, and request enquiry into our claims. We have agreed to strive for the following objects which are our only chance of living in our Mother country and retaining honour:

- (1) Our Shaikh Isa to remain as the Ruler as regards all internal affairs as in the past without any interference from the Consul and in accordance with the good relations between us and the British Government. If he should of his own free will accept Hamad as his Agent we will accept him.
- (2) All Court cases to be sent to the *Shara* or *Urfi* (Commercial) Courts, which is in accordance with the *Shara*.
- (3) A National Parliament to be started to look after the interests of the people as in other countries [and according to some versions, departmental sub-councils to be established also].
- (4) A council of four acceptable persons skilled in diving affairs to decide all diving cases. [Presumably these were to be pearl merchants who could retain an oppressive control over the divers.]
- (5) The Consul to be forbidden to break the good relations existing between Great Britain and the Bahrain Government or to interfere in internal matters."

29. To understand the situation in which such a collection of demands was possible it is necessary to consider the basic social structure of the country. The Al Khalifa rule was founded on the privileged position of the Sunni, and both required the continuance of Baharna servility. On the 9th of June, 1924, the Political Resident, Lieutenant-Colonel Prideaux, wrote to the Secretary to the Government of India as follows:—

"The Government of India will remember that in 1869 the father of Shaikh Isa bin Ali was killed by a cousin who usurped the Chiefship of Bahrain. The British Government intervened, the enemies of the deceased Shaikh Ali bin Isa were imprisoned, and Shaikh Isa was installed as chief on the nomination of the Arab (*i.e.*, Sunni) tribes of Bahrain. Shaikh Isa has always entertained an exaggerated idea of the benefits conferred on him on this occasion by the tribes, who in consequence have been accustomed to assert their internal autocracy and to deny the Chiefs right to pass orders upon them. This has been the chief cause of the Shaikh's unsatisfactory rule. The mass of the people of Bahrain, who are Arab-speaking Shiahs, were the sufferers and their condition resembled that of helots, who could call no lands nor the produce of any lands their own. . . ."

30. Later in the same despatch he says:—

"The persons most interested in suppressing the new régime are the tribal Shaikhs, the more dishonest and tyrannical pearling *Nakhudas* and the cadet members of the Al Khalifa family, who receive allowances from the State."

31. The unholy alliance between the Al Khalifa, the Sunni tribes and the Sunni pearl merchants was thus firmly based.

32. Nevertheless, the methods of Abdul Wahab Zayani, the author of the Sunni petition, were more sophisticated than most of his kind. He had always been attracted by modern political ideas, and had thereby incurred the displeasure of Shaikh Isa.

33. "Abdul Wahab's Parliament," wrote Lieutenant-Colonel Trevor to the Government of India on the 22nd of March, 1924, "consisted (in his imagination) of a few men, certainly not more than a dozen, all Sunnis, presided over and presumably nominated by himself. Major Daly tells me that Abdul Wahab returned from Bombay (where he had been compelled to reside owing to the unpopularity of his views with the Al Khalifa family) about the time he himself was appointed Political Agent. At first Major Daly, thinking that Abdul Wahab was agitating for representative government, interested himself a good deal in the matter having long interviews with Abdul Wahab, &c., but as soon as he found out the true nature of Abdul Wahab's so-called Parliament, he saw it would be useless, as even if it materialised and got power, it would only transfer power from the hands of the Shaikh to those of an oligarchy." Lieutenant-Colonel Trevor went on to say: "Abdul Wahab's Congress is described as including the Chiefs of the Tribes, Nobles, *Ulama* and Merchants and the 12 delegates included 'the chiefs of the Taifa.' As a matter of fact there are no real tribes worthy of the name in Bahrain—the Dawasir were the nearest approach to a real tribe, but they have gone (see below). Abdul Wahab alternately describes himself as the 'Chief of a Taifa' or one of the '*Ulema*.' He is neither (his only claim to being one of the '*Ulema*' consists in the white turban which he habitually wears) being merely one of the Zayani family which consists of a small number of well-to-do pearling *nakhudas* and traders."

34. After Major Daly's unsympathetic reaction to his schemes and after it became obvious that the Sunni oligarchy could not expect the backing of the Government of India, Zayani transferred his support to Shaikh Isa whom he now represented as a maligned Arab martyr chieftain who had suffered in the cause of patriotism. For his pains he and his friends Abdul Latif and Ahmed bin Layeh were exiled to India, and the Egyptian headmaster, Mulla Hafiz, was deported at the same time. In India Zayani composed a long memorial on behalf of Shaikh Isa which they addressed to the Viceroy, Lord Reading. Incidentally, the first reference that I can find to Sa'ad Al Shemlan, the Sunni agitator of the 1938 disturbances and father of Abdul Aziz Shemlan, the acting Secretary of the National Union Committee, is his signature on a letter of this period written in support of Zayani.

35. The tone and quality of Zayani's memorial can be gauged from the paragraph which begins: "Your Excellency, Bahrain has a minority of the Sh'ia community. The clerk of the Consulate started dictating their statements expressing gratitude and support for Mr. Daly and they wrote against their will, and under pressure, and some of them wrote for self-interest, &c. . . ."

36. It is significant that this document also contains complaints to the effect that Major Daly had transferred the revenue of the Government to a British bank [this no doubt caused irritation to *nakhuda* money lenders] and had brought in foreigners to supplant the native police. The new levies were recruited in 1924 and replaced the obsolete Shaikhly Guard and night watchman system. The new corps apparently contained some Persians and Baharnas, but the Sunni Arabs, as one might expect from a pampered class, considered such service beneath them.

37. The memorandum also implied that Major Daly had conceived a serious dislike of the Arab people during his earlier career in Mesopotamia. There is, of course, no evidence for this.

38. Even the decisive action of May 1923 did not completely quell the more extreme of the Al Khalifa and the tribesmen. Fortunately, the Dawasir, disgusted by the new state of affairs, made one of their periodic abandonments of their stronghold of Budaia and emigrated to the mainland, and the Political Resident was careful to see that they left no remnant behind to stir up trouble. In the early part of 1924, however, Shaikh Khalid al Khalifa, the Ruler's cousin, was responsible for two murderous onslaughts on the Baharna settlements on Sitra, and Shaikh Hamad was obliged to banish some of this section of his family from the country. The perpetual intrigues of the dispossessed Shaikh Isa and the masterful Abdulla were not so easily extinguished, and it became clear that if Shaikh Hamad's régime was to survive, he would require considerable assistance from outside. This was indeed one of the factors in the establishment of "The Bahrain Government" in the period 1925–30.

39. Before I move on to consider that period, I should like to point out some of the features of the 1921–23 crisis which have had a permanent significance. In the first place, the intervention of "the Great Government" had brought home

to the Ruler and to all classes of his subjects that the British representatives of the Government of India were able and, if sufficiently moved, willing to interfere decisively in the internal affairs of Bahrain. Now, although that intervention had the salutary effect of preventing the Ruler and his family from indulging in the more flagrant forms of oppression, they lost thereby to some extent their will to rule, and began to rely on the British to pull them out of any internal difficulty. This was accentuated by the personalities of both Shaikh Hamad and his son, the present Ruler, Shaikh Salman, who though harmless and well meaning enough, cannot be described as dynamic personalities and would not have survived long outside a semi-protected State. The same observation can be applied to their disgruntled people, who have ever since looked to us and not to the Bahrain Government for the practical realisation of their political demands, and it is interesting to note that the Baharna leaders petitioned the Political Agent at the beginning of the 1935, the 1938 and the 1954 troubles, just as they had in 1921. On the subsequent occasions, however, the Political Agent made no promises but referred them to their Ruler. Another significant feature of the crisis had been the satisfaction of the fundamental demand of the wretched Sh'ia peasantry, that is the liberation of themselves and their lands from arbitrary tyranny. Thenceforth the village Baharna tended to lose interest in politics, and for the next 20 years at any rate, left such matters to the town Baharna politicians to a considerable extent. The last point which is noteworthy is that in this crisis, though the basic grievances had been Baharna grievances, it was the Sunni "reactionary oligarchy" who possessed the vocabulary and technique of political protest. Even to-day, under the impact of Egyptian precept and example, the Sunni politicians of Bahrain tend to possess more revolutionary "know how" than the Baharna.

40. I must also draw attention to the wider motives for the Government of India's decisive interference in Shaikh Isa's government. It appears from the files that Lieutenant-Colonel Trevor and Major Daly were both chiefly moved by what seemed to them the absolute necessity of putting an end to an insupportable tyranny and ameliorating the terrible suffering of the Baharna. The Government of Simla, however, in its endorsement of their policy, undoubtedly took into consideration the Persian claim to Bahrain and the embarrassment which we might suffer if the world became acquainted with the disgraceful conditions prevailing in Bahrain as a result of the case being brought by Persia before the League of Nations. The growing power on the mainland of Arabia of the Sultan of Nejd (as Ibn Saud was then styled) may well have been another factor which entered into the Government of India's thinking at this time.

41. In putting forward this analysis, it should in all fairness be recorded that during part of 1923 Lieutenant-Colonel Trevor was absent from Bushire and was temporarily relieved by Lieutenant-Colonel Knox. At the beginning of his tenure of office, Lieutenant-Colonel Knox tried, unsuccessfully, to present a totally different interpretation of the Bahrain situation to the Government of India. The only possible explanation is that he had come heavily under the influence of the propaganda of the Sunni Party.

42. "Shaikh Isa's case," he stated in May 1923, "has not been fully presented and sufficient consideration has not been paid to the Sunni point of view." Much of the Baharna agitation was in his view bogus or at least exaggerated. "I do not agree," he says, "that misrule has reached such a pitch—matters are no worse than the state of affairs we have tolerated for twenty years." He rather gives away his argument, however, when he remarks in connexion with taxation: "You will not carry responsible Sunni opinion with you unless you allow for the privileged position of the Sunnis." Lieutenant-Colonel Knox's advice was to delay drastic reforms until after the death of Shaikh Isa.

43. Whatever may be thought of his assessment of the situation, and I do not think that it can possibly have been as valid as that of Lieutenant-Colonel Trevor and Major Daly, it was probably necessary to come to some sort of compromise with the Al Khalifa, if they were to continue as the ruling class, and there was unfortunately no obvious substitute for what Lieutenant-Colonel Barrett called that "brood of uneducated savages with a veneer of town manners."

44. This is the background against which Lieutenant-Colonel Haworth wrote on the 2nd of February, 1927, to the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India: "Daly's unquenchable energy did a good deal of harm. Not only did

people dislike the total suppression of Shaikh Hamad (who was admittedly somewhat cowed by the events of the crisis) but his political limitations had a bad effect upon the Arabs of the country around and made them afraid of us." Again, the Political Resident wrote to the Acting Political Agent, Captain Alban: "The Shaikh has been too much suppressed."

45. It should be remembered that the Indian Government had an increasing interest in a stable and settled régime in Bahrain. Apart from the potential menace presented by Reza Shah on one hand and Ibn Saud on the other, our trade with the island was increasing and 1925 was the date of the first oil concession. Moreover the value of Bahrain as a possible air and naval base had been considered. And besides political factors, Bahrain had now to be viewed as a place where numbers of British people would be obliged to live.

46. These considerations and the continuing chaos of the Shaikhly rule led to a policy of penetrating the Ruler's administration with British officials and to the foundation of the "Bahrain Government" as we now know it. In 1923 a new British Director of Customs was introduced. In 1924 the Levies were founded, and in 1926 these were replaced by a regular police force. In 1926 also Mr. Charles Belgrave was appointed Financial Adviser.

47. The following extract from Captain Prior's despatch of June 29, 1929, to the Political Resident describes the Bahrain Government in the first flush of its early achievements. It is remarkable how much was accomplished in those early years and how little development, comparatively speaking, there has been since that time. This is easily the most optimistic despatch on the Bahrain political files: "I will now consider what reforms were contemplated. It appears from the letter forwarded with Residency letter to the Government No. 307/5 of June 15, 1923, that the principal reforms contemplated were reform of finances, including the civil list, Customs, Government offices and a survey. As a result of the second Sitrah outrage a levy corps was formed, to be disbanded later and Punjabi Hussalmens being substituted for the Muscati Baluchis. Pearling reforms were also contemplated though I cannot trace any proposals made to the Government concerning this. Proposals were made for a Judicial assistant to the Political Agent, to be paid for by the State, but this idea was apparently dropped, and finally Mr. Belgrave was engaged as Financial Adviser. Mr. de Grenier had already been engaged to reorganise the Customs after Mr. Bowyer."

48. "The reforms which were actually effected are:—

- (a) A Financial Adviser controlling all expenditure and doing his best to limit a too buoyant Civil List.
- (b) A reorganised Customs department, with which is combined Boat Registration, Collection of Pearling Licenses, Passport and Port Officer's duties.
- (c) A reformed Court consisting of the Adviser and Shaikh's heir apparent and a lower court composed of the Assistant Adviser and another Al Khalifa.
- (d) Diving reforms. A properly constituted Court, supervision of Nakhodas books and an account book for each diver.
- (e) Land Department. A survey has almost been completed and when finished surveyors will be released.
- (f) Police under a British Commandant and no longer under the municipality. They consist of roughly 100 Indian armed police (replaced by Arabs) and a local force of uniformed constables, mostly Persians, and a force of natus or night watchmen.
- (g) Public works. Sea-road built; artesian wells sunk, electric light about to be installed.
- (h) Education. One girls' school and five boys' schools.
- (i) Waqfs. Shia Waqfs removed from Qadhis by popular desire and placed in charge of laymen. An attempt by the Bahrain Government to do this in 1926 created a riot but it has now come about by the action of the Shias themselves.
- (j) Municipalities. The Manama municipality has made great strides and the newly created Muharraq municipality has made wonderful progress."

49. Even then however there were doubts about the viability of the unique political structure of Bahrain especially with respect to the position of the Indian

Government. Captain Prior's despatch continues "Our penetration of Bahrain has been inevitable and is now accepted and it is too late to go back now. In fact it is obvious to the student of history that Bahrain will become another Zanzibar. If a protectorate is declared the day will be hastened and as the administration is more closely regulated, so our real power will diminish just as the power of the District Magistrate in Mount Abu has decreased since it was leased from the Sirahi State and made British territory. We should, therefore, while not risking the improvements we have faced so much obloquy to bring about, set our face against any further extension of British influence, which paradoxically will only weaken our position, and put off the evil day of what I may call 'Zanzibarisation' as long as possible."

50. The artificiality of the Bahrain Government was in fact apparent from the outset, and many of the despatches of this period are full of constitutional theorising and comparisons with the Indian States. The problem of whether we should take over more or less administrative functions was continually discussed. There were also incidentally early doubts about the long-term efficiency of the Bahrain Government and Mr. Belgrave's position was already considered to be over-centralised.

51. The Political Resident, Lieutenant-Colonel Barrett, believed that the most desirable solution was that the Al Khalifa should be trained to take an expert part in administration and that an Administrative Council should be formed after old Shaikh Isa's death.

52. In a despatch to the Government of India of August 28, 1929, he wrote "Eight Bahraini boys, including three close relations of the Ruling Chief, have been sent to the American University at Beirut for education. I trust that these boys will turn out well, and with Shaikh Mubarak—the most promising of the sons of Shaikh Hamad—will provide material for the higher appointments in the State, and ultimately will prove competent to take over the positions now held by the European Adviser and Customs Director."

53. Some of the observations made about the young shaikhs are interesting in the light of their subsequent development. Shaikh Khalifa bin Mohamed (No. 12 in Bahrain personalities list) the present Director of Public Security was considered promising. Shaikh Daij bin Hamad (No. 7 in Bahrain personalities) the present Chief Judge and a notorious libertine, was a very spoilt child and his indulgent family could not bear to send him abroad to be educated. The present Ruler, Shaikh Salman bin Hamad, was described as possessing some solid qualities, but was uneducated, and was "in some ways little removed from the Bedu."

54. From 1930-35 there are virtually no papers on the internal politics of Bahrain. This was evidently a period of comparative calm when all classes were more or less satisfied with the reforms of the immediately preceding period. The great preoccupation of the time was of course the search for oil and on June 1, 1932, it was struck for the first time in Bahrain, and for the first time on the western shore of the Persian Gulf.

55. On November 7, 1934, the Political Agent, Lieutenant-Colonel Loch wrote to the Political Resident, Lieutenant-Colonel Fowle, "I am rather disturbed by a recrudescence of the old bitter feeling between Sunnis and Sh'iahs in Bahrain. When I returned to Bahrain two years ago, I was immensely struck by the good relations between the two denominations. Unfortunately a change has occurred in the last few months."

56. The first signs of revived discontent were the conversion of an obscure member of the Al Khalifa to the Shia sect which caused a great stir in the ruling family, and a series of complaints by villages that the Ruler's camels were trampling on their fields and killing their trees. These complaints inspired the Political Agent to deliver the Ruler a lecture on the origins of the French Revolution. Another symptom of unrest was the number of rent cases in the Courts. Evidently the Al Khalifa were in the habit of disposing of rent leases to Baharna peasants by auction, with the result that the tenant acquired his lease at a price far beyond his means and was eventually hauled before the Courts for failure to pay. This situation was accenuated by a fall in the price of dates. There were also Baharna complaints that the law as being administered in the Sunnis' favour. Shaikh Salman bin Hamad was again marked out as a particular offender.

57. Nevertheless, the significant point is that these agricultural complaints, although heeded and to some extent remedied by the Government, were never presented in a unified form. The formal petition compiled by the Baharna leaders (mainly Manama merchants and schoolmasters) was concerned with separate and personal grievances. Yet these men henceforth claimed (and claim) to be the leaders of all the Baharna. Indeed some of their names are familiar enough: Mansur Al Oraiyyadh (No. 14 in Bahrain Personalities list), Muhsin Al Tajir, until recently one of the Sh'ia members of the National Union Committee (No. 16 in Bahrain Personalities list), and Abdulla Ali Al Alaiwat, who is still a member. Admittedly there were also the villagers Abdul Aziz bin Haji of Burri and Ali bin Abbas of Aali, but it is clear that the Manama Baharna were much more prominent, active and vocal.

58. Their first demands were:—

- (1) That Court cases should be settled in accordance with established law.
- (2) That the Baharna should have proportional representation on the Municipal and *Urfi* (Commercial) Councils.
- (3) That the Baharna should be restored their rights on the Board of Education (evidently a reference to the pre-1927 state of affairs).

The second and third of these requests were obviously of no interest to the village of Sh'ia.

59. The Ruler's reply to these demands, though admittedly prompted by the Political Agent, was satisfactory enough. He agreed that all the existing '*Alans*' (decrees) should be collated and published in a book, and that a committee should be formed to draft a Civil and a Criminal Code for non-Sharia cases. He also agreed to increased Sh'ia representation on the Municipal and *Urfi* councils and welcomed an increase of Sh'ia students in the schools. Indeed, he said he had put the latter reforms into motion before the agitation had occurred.

60. The four town Baharna, however, were dissatisfied by this reply. They described it as mere *hawa* (wind) and in a conversation with Mr. Belgrave "complained of being more *multhoon* than they were in Shaikh Isa's time because in those days they lived in darkness, but to-day they were beginning to see, owing to travel and reading, and the Baharna now compared their position to that of the people of other countries such as Iraq." "I suggested" wrote Mr. Belgrave, "a comparison with Ibn Saud's country, but such a comparison, they said, would be a comparison to sheer oppression."

61. Later these leaders put forward an amplification of their former demands requesting a majority on the Municipal Councils, elections for the *Majlis al Urfi*, more Sh'ia schoolmasters in the town schools, appointment of the young Sh'ia Abdul Karim, the present head of Manama police, as Chief of Police, and also of a third Sh'ia *Qadhi*. Besides this they called for the employment of more Baharna in the Bahrain Petroleum Company.

62. The Ruler granted the four an audience but soon lost his temper and dismissed them abruptly. He had concluded, probably correctly, that most of their further demands were not shared by the majority of their community.

63. After that the political agitation seems to have petered out and the rest of 1935 was taken up with a long and infinitely complicated wrangle about the Sh'ia Sharia Court, in fact lingering on until 1938. The *Qadhis*, particularly Shaikh Abdulla of Manama, were exceedingly corrupt and were intensely disliked by most of their "flock." One by one they were eased out of their position (two in 1938) and replaced by better men, notably Shaikh Al Hilli from Iraq (who died here just recently). Nevertheless they were still able to exert a certain influence on some of the Baharna and Shaikh Abdulla at least remained a thorn in the flesh of the Bahrain Government for several years to come.

64. Meanwhile the Bahrain Government paid a certain amount of attention to the Courts, including the appointment of another Al Khalifa Judge, but none of this activity seems to have amounted to much. The idea of a British Legal Adviser was suggested and rejected. The legal drafting and compiling committee which the Ruler had promised was set up under Shaikh Salman, Yussef Kanoo and Mansur Al Oraiyyadh. It sat for a month or so and then the members became bored. The extent of its achievement is marked by Colonel Prior in his despatch of May 25, 1941, which, incidentally, unmasks the true author of the "Ruler's reforms: "As regards

the Bahrain Courts, the public have cause for complaint. About ten years ago, when the Courts were very much better, I urged Belgrave to introduce some codes and to collect and collate the very large number of 'Alans or notices of the Bahrain Government which had the force of law. I obtained copies of the Sudan Penal Code which was admirably suited to Bahrain, and had the inestimable advantage of a first class Arabic translation, and recommended its introduction. I also got him to place a small committee in charge of the compilation of the 'Alans. But these proposals are where I left them in 1932. . . . The Shaikhly Judges are incompetent, lazy and arbitrary and compare unfavourably with those in Kuwait." We are still, of course, to-day awaiting the arrival of Dr. Sanhoury from Egypt.

65. There was a slight rustle of the old agricultural troubles before the agitation of 1938, but there is no doubt that the main seat of the trouble was in the towns.

66. The Political Agent, Mr. Weightman, analysed the causes of the outbreak as follows:—

- (1) The advent of the semi-intelligentsia and *effendi* class in the towns and in the Bahrain Petroleum Company, a class imbued with advanced political ideas and influenced by the Arab Press which owing to the contemporary troubles in Palestine was violently anti-British. This class the Political Agent dismissed as "insignificant, unrepresentative and contemptible."
- (2) The influence of the constitutional developments in Kuwait and Dubai. 1938 was the year when a form of conciliar institution was temporarily established in the Governments of both these States.
- (3) Economic depression owing to a general fall in world prices and a decrease in local purchasing power owing to a diminution in the number of Europeans and Americans in the Bahrain Petroleum Company. This is perhaps to be linked with the lull which separated the end of the exploration stage and the beginning of production.
- (4) Complaints about the courts.

67. The Agitation of November 1938 was remarkable for the first alliance between Baharna and Sunni leaders. The Baharna were the Manama Baharna leaders of the 1935 petition, and the Sunni involved were a combination of disreputable and congenital malcontents, certain young and frustrated members of well-known Holis families—Fakhroo, Kanoo, &c. (These are Persian Sunnis claiming distant Arab origin who have resided in Bahrain for several generations), and the new "effendi" of whatever social or sectarian origin. These elements were not unified into a single group and the several coalitions which were established did not last more than a few days. It is therefore impossible, from the very inadequate information contained on the files, to produce a coherent account.

68. Mr. Belgrave in a letter of that time to the Political Agent listed the trouble-makers as follows:—the Baharna leaders, Muhsim al Tajar and his brother Said Said, Abdulla al Alwaat, Mansur Al Arayyed, Seyid Ali, the dismissed and embittered Shia Qadhi Shaikh Abdulla who was still agitating for the removal of the other two old Qadhis who had plotted his overthrow; and the following "Arabs"—Ibrahim bin Jabr—"a semi-religious crank from Muharraq"; Sa'ad bin Shemlan—"an ex-Wakhil debarred from the courts for dishonesty"; Ali bin Khalifa al Fadhl—irritated at not being appointed to various committees; Khalil Moayyed—"a progressive." To these should be added Ahmed Shirawi who was exiled with Sa'ad. Ahmed is the father of Yussef Shirawi, an official of the Public Relations Department to the Bahrain Government. He now lives in Saudi Arabia and for the sake of his son has become a "moderate." There were also in this group some Holis families such as the Kanoos, who were disgruntled because the Government had refused to lend them money.

69. "Most of the latter," wrote Mr. Belgrave, referring to the "Arab Agitators," "have personal grievances, including the supreme grievance of having at one time or another been detected in some particularly disgraceful villainy."

70. As for the "effendis" and young intellectuals, the only detail I can discover is a list of youth, suspected of having written for *Al Rabit al Arabiya* an anti-British Egyptian newspaper which carried various misleading articles on Bahrain during 1938 and 1939. One of these young men turns out to be Ali Al Tajir, a nephew of Muhsin Al Tajir and one of the elected members of the present

but as yet untried Education Committee. He is to-day employed by Petroleum Concessions Limited as a translator and in this capacity has rendered most valuable service by translating the bulk of the documents connected with the Buraimi case.

71. The first approach to the Government was made by five Baharna and five Arabs (of the Sa'ad Shemlan group) who demanded the removal of the Syrian director of Education and the reform of the Law, and complained about the lack of discipline and prevalence of corruption in (though not the racial composition of) the Police force, abuses in the Sharia courts, the preferential treatment given by the Bahrain Petroleum Company to foreigners, confusion in the Passport and Electricity departments, the rudeness of Customs officials, the corruption and harshness in the gaols (fettors, &c.) and in fact castigated virtually all departments of the Government.

72. They also put forward certain fundamental constitutional demands. "The object of the persons who moved the question of reforms," reported the Political Agent to the Political Resident on 27th October, 1938, "is to form a Council of Administration like that of Kuwait consisting of ten members—five Bahrainis and five Arabs. Besides this council, they want to form a Committee to whom all the orders passed by the Council are sent for confirmation. The head of this Committee will be Shaikh Abdulla bin Isa who has also been earmarked for heir apparentship. The people do not want Shaikh Salman to be an heir apparent though Yussef Kakhroo is trying to get the people on his side. Shaikh Hamad will remain as before the Ruler of Bahrain. My informant told me that they also do not want Mr. Belgrave to remain any longer in Bahrain but if the Political Agent insists that he should remain, they have no objection on condition that he should be a Financial Adviser and his duties to be limited to keeping and checking the account of the Bahrain Petroleum Company and at the same time be under the Council. But if the Political Agent agrees that Mr. Belgrave should leave Bahrain and does not appoint another man in his place as Financial Adviser and entrusts the Council with the financial affairs, they are prepared to undertake the work and submit the accounts to the Political Agent for inspection."

73. It rapidly became evident that the ten leaders were not united. The Baharna representatives came separately to see Mr. Belgrave and admitted that their real complaints were:—

- (1) The inefficiency of the courts, especially the Sharia;
- (2) Too many Sunnis on the Municipalities and in the schools. The Government obviously had its eye on the support of these Baharna when it promised that a legal expert should be chosen from abroad to reform the courts and train the Al Khalifa judges, dismissed another Shia Qadhi, produced a strict list of procedure for Shia Qadhis, and planned a survey of the existing educational system with a view to reform.

74. After this the town Baharna became markedly less vociferous, and although there is some evidence that they toured the villages to whip up support for agitation against the Bahrain Petroleum Company, and received, so it is reported, a very mixed reception in certain villages, notably Sanabis, as a result of Qadhi opposition the initiative certainly passed to the Sunni agitators.

75. The Bahrain Government was now confident that it could deal with the situation. Shemlan and Ahmed Shirawi were clapped into gaol. The following day their supporters held a partial strike, mainly of the clerical and technical employees of the Bahrain Petroleum Company and the Ruler promptly arrested the ringleader, Ali bin Khalifa Al Fadhl, also.

76. During the next few months there was a storm of indignation from all radical Sunni elements. Shemlan's supporters, usually styled the "National Free Youth," produced many pamphlets, curiously similar to the publications of the present Committee, demanding the release of the prisoners, an elected Council of Education, a Judicial Council, a Labour Dispute Committee. It is significant that they also called for the abolition of the cinema, no doubt an attempt to secure fanatic religious support. Their efforts, however, to enlist the aid of the divers and lower class Baharna failed completely. Some of the pamphlets also called for the removal of the Adviser.

77. A curious compilation of this period was a petition produced by certain Holis "progressives," including Abdulrahman Zayani and Yussef Kanoo, which embodied the four somewhat ill-assorted stipulations—(1) Reforms in the Police, (2) Reforms in the Courts and (3) Restrictions on Liquor to remain, (4) No liberty for women.

78. The Bahrain Government was so confused by all this polemic literature that it asked for a definitive memorandum of grievances to be prepared and presented. The people who considered themselves fitted for such a task were one Arab, one Holis merchant and three of the inevitable Manama Baharna.

79. These worthies defined the public demands as (1) an education committee consisting of four Sunni and four Shia, (2) the dismissal of the existing judges and the appointment of four new ones—two from the people (one Sunni and one Shia), one from the Government and an expert criminal judge from Iraq who could be replaced by a Bahraini in due course, (3) the Municipalities should contain Bahrainis instead of foreigners (I do not quite understand this though it may have been a move against certain Holis merchants), (4) the establishment of a Labour Disputes Committee, (5) a council of six (three Sunnis and three Shia) to represent the people.

80. So far as I can see the only response by the Bahrain Government to this compilation was the appointment, after a long investigation into labour conditions in the Bahrain Petroleum Company, of an official Government representative to the Company, the undertaking of an Educational Survey, which had already been promised, and the decision to appoint a British Legal Adviser who was never in fact found.

81. The agitation gradually died down. The "Arabs" of Hidd and some Baharna villagers, no doubt influenced by Qadhis, came forward and presented written declarations of loyalty to the Ruler and dissociation from the demands of the agitators. Ali Al Fadhl appealed from gaol for intercession to King Ibn Saud whom he had once served in the Yemen, and after special pleading by the latter he was released, while Shemlan and Shirawi were exiled to India where they aired their grievances in the Bombay Press. It seems that other members of their group were sufficiently cowed to refrain from supporting action. Indeed the Bahrain Government was left in peace for 15 years.

82. But despite these fifteen years of silence which separated the 1938 troubles from the disturbances of 1953, it should be noted that the Political Resident in office in 1938 did not share the complacent belief of the Ruler, Mr. Belgrave and the Political Agent that the crisis of that year had been satisfactorily surmounted. Sir Trenchard Fowle had farseeing ideas for the development of Bahrain's Constitution.

83. "The obvious remedy appears to me," he wrote to the Political Agent on 17th November, 1938, "an Advisory Council to be set up by the Shaikh and subject to what you have to say on the subject, I propose giving this advice to Shaikh Hamad and the Bahrain Government. . . . I gave exactly the same advice to two other Shaikhs—Kuwait and Dubai. They did not take it and the consequence is that both of them have now been forcibly saddled with Executive Councils. In other words, instead of the Shaikhs sitting on the Council, the Council sits on the Shaikhs. Exactly the same thing will happen in Bahrain in my opinion sooner or later unless my suggestion is put into force. The popular movement, though not very strong at the moment, will no doubt grow in power and be joined by other elements who have hitherto held aloof from it—i.e., the Baharna, divers, coolies, foreigners, &c. It would of course have been better if the Bahrain Government had exercised reasonable foresight and instituted some such Council before the present agitation, but it is now better late than never. The advantages of such a council in clearing the air, meeting the legitimate grievances of the popular party, and giving the latter some of the hard experience and responsibility of self-government, seems to me clear. Further, having made this large concession, which will give a legal focus for expression of grievances, the Bahrain Government will be in a stronger position to deal fairly with those who employ illegal means. The essence of the Council would be that the members would be nominated by the Shaikh. I have little doubt that sooner of later agitation will arise that first, the Council should not be nominated, but elected by popular suffrage and second, that it should be Executive and not Advisory. But if the members are wisely chosen by

the Shaikh in the first instance under a good President, this agitation should become formidable later rather than sooner, and in any case, even if eventually some sort of an Executive Council has to be established, an interval filled by an Advisory Council, by which much valuable experience will be gained by all concerned, would be a very useful stepping stone."

84. In a subsequent despatch written on 13th December, 1938, the Political Resident made another proposal of the same kind, "What would you and Belgrave think of an Advisory Financial Committee on the same lines as the Educational Committee?"

85. On the other hand, Mr. Weightman, the Political Agent, whose views on the situation seem to have been indistinguishable from those of the Adviser, considered that both these constitutional innovations were unacceptable, unnecessary and undesirable. He did appreciate, however, in his despatch of 26th November, 1938, that "admittedly one must not ignore the spirit of the times, and great care and foresight must be employed. Propaganda is essential to dissipate ignorance and misconception, and there must be active steps in support of it . . . Belgrave must be relieved more and more from routine."

86. His general attitude towards the agitation of the period is seen in his despatch of December 28, 1938. "We had not seen how Bahrain would react to anonymous underground agitation, and I was worried by the apparent credulity of the people towards false or distorted rumour. The agitation was amorphous and it was impossible in the early stages to ascertain clearly how widespread restlessness might be. The ultimate result has been heartening. The 'real Arabs' have rallied to the Shaikh in a spirit of genuine affection and loyalty; the Baharna of the villages have been pouring into Manama lately to declare their entire contentment and loyalty and to protest against the assumption of leadership over them by some of the Manama Town Baharna 'politicians'; fuller investigation has shown that the agitation and so-called nationalism centred in the community of Holis, and resentment at what is regarded locally as their impertinence and presumption is profound. In the light of these facts I would say that the odds are heavily against the growth of any sort of popular agitation for years to come and granted the method of evolution for which I have pleaded (advocating departmental reform rather than fundamental constitutional changes) . . . I should anticipate the continuance in its essentials of the present system of Government in Bahrain long after the present generation is in its grave."

87. Mr. Weightman's analysis of the nature of the agitation was accurate in some respects, for it is true that the Sunni agitators of 1938 represented hardly anyone but themselves. Nevertheless unlike the Zayani clique of 1923, they had at least some intention, in alliance with the town Baharna leaders, of speaking for all sections of the community, and there is no doubt that they can be regarded as the true, if remote, precursors of the present Committee movement. Indeed, however thin the claims of 1938 appear to have been, there is clearly some personal justification for the impatience of men like Abdul Aziz Shemlan who have been brought up in an atmosphere of demagogic politics and for the Baharna leaders who have been engaged in a dogged struggle for increased communal rights since 1935. For this reason at least I feel that it might have been a very good thing if more heed had been paid to Sir Trenchard Fowle's prophecy and to his proposals, though I can well appreciate that the Government of India would have had a very difficult time with the Adviser and Shaikh Hamad.

88. It is of some interest that during late 1938 and early 1939 there was considerable comment on the Bahrain situation in the nationalist Press in other parts of the Arab world. The violently anti-British Press of Iraq was particularly active. One article in the Beirut newspaper, *Al Nahar* (December 17, 1938), was entitled: "Is Mr. Pankriff (Belgrave) Dictator of Bahrain?" The Egyptian newspaper *Al Rabita* (July 27, 1938) attacked Britain's strategic control of the islands and it is instructive to compare this extract with Al Bakir's similar remarks. "The British Government proposed through the British Consul in Bahrain to buy this plot of ground and meeting with refusal took it by force. On the spot, the British have built several buildings for military use, a sports ground, a cinema and a ball room for British soldiers. On the coast an aerodrome has been created. Four warships and four flying-boats stay nearby permanently. The Bahrain Government paid for all the expenses and the British Government did not pay a piastre." A typical Iraqi article from *Al Istiqlal* of Baghdad (February 5, 1939)

stated: "The Arabs' feeling of sympathy towards Palestine has been choked and they have been prevented from raising subscriptions for the Palestine victims. The situation is terrible but the complaints are overlooked. The Government is tyrannic and went as far as trying to revive the old war of the communities. They believe in the principle of divide and rule. Bahrain has its eyes turned to Iraq and firmly hopes to put her fate in Iraqi hands." One is immediately reminded of the Egyptian propaganda of our own day.

89. As has been noticed, what Mr. Weightman called "the present system of government" continued unchallenged and events justified him in his expectation of a long cessation of agitation, though his estimate that the respite would continue for more than a generation has proved over-sanguine. The most striking testimonial of this that I know is Sir Rupert Hay's sole comment, in paragraph 12 of the Bahrain section of his compilation P.G. 53, on the subject covered by this despatch. "There has been" he writes, "no sign of any agitation in Bahrain for a more popular form of government but anonymous pamphlets have appeared from time to time demanding Belgrave's removal, and there have been complaints, mostly anonymous, regarding the Bahrain Government Hospital and the British Medical Officer in charge of it, the local courts, and the lack of accommodation in the schools. Some younger members of the intelligentsia are believed to be responsible for such agitation but there does not appear to be any organised party." It is now difficult to understand how the Bahrain Government was granted such a long period of peace and quiet, though it was not, in its comfortable torpor, spared the criticism of official observers as is vividly illustrated by Lieutenant-Colonel Prior's despatch of May 25, a portion of which was enclosed under cover of my letter 1011/1/329/56 G. of July 23 to Riches. Indeed a reading of these archives confirms me in the depressing belief that "the Bahrain Government" though successful and popular enough in its golden age, and though benevolent enough so far as purely material reform is concerned, has failed to evolve constitutionally, except when prodded very hard by ourselves, and has for some considerable time been sadly obsolete in form and totally insensitive to the climate of the age and the aspiration of the rising classes.

90. I will forbear from commenting in detail on Al Bakir's account of the final and contemporary phase of the history of agitation in Bahrain for the details are well known and available. I merely observe that most of his facts dealing with this period, though tendentiously and egotistically selected and interpreted, are substantially correct. This is not surprising for here Abdulrahman Al Bakir, latter day Bahraini politician, is on more familiar ground.

91. I am sending copies of this despatch and its enclosure to Her Majesty's Political Agency, Bahrain.

I have, &c.

C. A. GAULT.

EA 1642/23

No. 10

JURISDICTION IN THE PERSIAN GULF

Sir Bernard Burrows to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received September 24)

(No. 103. Confidential)
Sir,

Bahrain,

September 17, 1956.

I regret the delay which has occurred in commenting on Mr. Riches' letter EA 1642/10 of May 30 about legislative and judicial policy in the Persian Gulf. I have now obtained the views of the Political Agents principally concerned and have the honour to set out my views below.

2. I welcome the opportunity to review our general policy in these matters since it has become clear in the period since Sir Eric Beckett's visit in 1952 that the course which he advocated may not be possible of attainment in a foreseeable time. The intervening period has shown that the local Rulers, and in one case the public, are more reluctant than had been hoped to accept legislation conforming to our standards. At the same time our own legislation has been considerably extended and re-codified, with the result that our jurisdiction is in some ways even more out of step with the local jurisdictions than it was at the time of Sir Eric Beckett's visit. The stream of new regulations on our side has, however, fortunately slowed down in recent months, and it is clear that for the future we should carefully scrutinise all proposed legislation to see whether it is really essential, and that greater tidiness should not always be the decisive criterion.

3. As regards the likelihood of more extensive codification in local jurisdictions, the situation differs in the different territories. Bahrain has accepted in principle the need for codification and the introduction of a new penal code is only awaiting the work of Sanhoury, the Egyptian legal expert, who is studying the draft penal code in Cairo and it is hoped will before long report to the Bahrain Government. Similarly, a comprehensive labour law is ready to be submitted to the Bahrain Government by the Labour Law Committee which has been working here for many months. The production of a civil code will take a good deal longer since it will have to be based on local precedents and customs which it will take a long time to collect and assess. It is likely that it may be helpful to obtain advice from some foreign Moslem jurist in preparing major pieces of legislation such as the penal and civil codes and codes of procedure for Bahrain since this will make them more easily acceptable. On other matters on which local legislation is required it will very likely be possible to do the drafting in co-operation between the Bahrain Government and ourselves and to secure legislation conforming fairly closely with our own ideas. In Kuwait we have met with practically no success in our efforts to persuade the Ruler to introduce modern legislation either of a general character or for special purposes. The reason for the reluctance of the Ruler and of the senior Shaikhs to contemplate the introduction of new general law is their inertia with regard to change of all kinds and their respect for conservative local opinion which might be upset by such an innovation. It is possible, however, that if a new penal code is successfully introduced into Bahrain as a result of the labours of a Moslem jurist such as Sanhoury this would make it somewhat more likely that a similar code could be introduced in Kuwait. There is considerable enthusiasm for the introduction of special pieces of modern legislation, e.g., Traffic Regulations, among the younger Shaikhs and Kuwait Government officials with experience of other countries, and in the course of time we shall no doubt succeed in securing the adoption of some necessary pieces of legislation of this kind. The Ruler of Qatar has agreed to a number of specialised regulations for traffic, Customs, dangerous drugs, &c., and in that respect has shown himself more amenable to legislative progress than his colleague in Kuwait, but he is perhaps even further from accepting the idea that there is a need for codified laws on subjects which, to his way of thinking, are covered by the Sharia and he would almost certainly think the acceptance of such an idea to be unorthodox and impious. It must probably therefore be concluded that at least during the life of the present Ruler there is no prospect of securing the introduction of a general penal code, even one adopted from a Moslem country or prepared by a Moslem jurist. There is, however, a tendency to develop case law. The local Court before passing sentence

considers what sentences have been given in comparable cases in the past and it might be possible to develop this tendency by having comparable cases registered together so that they could be turned up and consulted when a new case of the same kind is before the Court.

4. The work of discussing new legislation with the Kuwait authorities is very greatly assisted by the presence at the Agency of a Registrar of Her Majesty's Court who is of Arab origin. Nevertheless I do not at present feel that it would be worth while to have a Moslem lawyer attached to my staff. The difficulties of introducing codified general legislation are so fundamental in Kuwait and Qatar that I do not think his presence would significantly help to overcome them. Mr. Hejazi can easily deal with the discussion of specialised legislation in Kuwait and could no doubt be lent temporarily to other Agencies for a similar purpose if necessary, but on the whole the Agencies in Bahrain and Qatar have hitherto been able to cope quite successfully on their own with these matters. When it comes to advising on a general penal code or some similar piece of legislation there will, if the Sanhoury experiment in Bahrain works well, probably be advantage in securing the services of a foreign Moslem expert rather than one attached to this Residency. It may well be that we shall in some cases have to accept compromises between what we think correct legislation and what the Rulers or local public opinion are prepared to accept. It will then be for us to decide whether we should vary our own legislation to fit in with the local legislation or whether we should retain our own version in the hope that the local legislation might eventually be brought up to our level. No hard and fast policy can be laid down on this matter in advance. The question of what is required under international agreements will of course be a powerful factor in reaching a decision on these matters.

5. As regards the introduction of trained judges from outside, this has already been accepted in Kuwait and it is the normal practice for an Egyptian judge to sit alongside the Shaikhly judges. In Bahrain there has been great resistance on the part of the Ruler to the introduction of foreign judges. He did, however, undertake in October 1955, that after the new laws had been introduced in consultation with Sanhoury, "a judge should be provided for each Court to sit with the local judges to apply the articles of the law which concern the country after they have been put into force." I fully expect, however, that pressure will be needed to keep the Ruler up to this undertaking when the time comes, since he has found it particularly difficult to dissociate in his mind the idea of ruling, which he believes is the prerogative of himself and his family, and the idea of judging. The Adviser tried to secure his agreement this summer to the appointment of a senior Bahraini official of the judicial administration and of a Palestinian lawyer who acts as Registrar of the local Courts to be temporary magistrates during the absence of most of the Shaikhly judges and magistrates, but the Ruler would not agree. It is most unlikely that the Ruler of Qatar will ever be prepared to appoint a foreign judge. Apart from the general feelings on the subject which he would share with the Ruler of Bahrain, he might also fear that a trained judge would overshadow his son Ahmed and his nephew Khalifah who now sit as judges and would therefore diminish their authority. It might be possible, however, in due course, to secure the appointment of a trained clerk for the local Court in Qatar. The Political Agent has recently reported that in spite of the primitive nature of the Court procedure and references to the Qadi when there is such a conflict of evidence that the Court cannot reach a decision on its own, the results are almost always on the right side. It should also be borne in mind that the British Adviser to the Qatar Government sits as a member of the Court and although he has to adapt himself to the local procedure his presence is no doubt a safeguard against any major abuse.

6. It would certainly be of great advantage if Arabs from the Gulf could be trained in the law in foreign countries and this will no doubt happen in time. At present there is the usual difficulty of finding anyone with a sufficiently high standard of general education to be worth training in the law and who is at the same time willing to devote his time to study and to acquiring experience instead of to more immediately lucrative pursuits.

7. As regards our own Courts I doubt if a sufficient case can yet be made for the stationing of a permanent Assistant Judge of the Chief Court in the Gulf. Difficult cases can now be dealt with in the first instance by Mr. Mawdsley or Mr. Hejazi, who are Registrars or Assistant Judges of all the Political Agents'

Courts, and appeals can be heard by Judge Haines either during his normal visits, or, if they are sufficiently urgent, by his coming on a special visit. One disadvantage of a permanent Assistant Judge of the Chief Court hearing cases in the first instance would be that the only appeal would lie to the Full Court, the assembling of which presents formidable administrative and financial problems. There would not, moreover, be enough work for an Assistant Judge of the Chief Court in the purely judicial sphere. He would have, therefore, to concern himself also with legislation, as Judge Haines does at present, and for this he would in any case have to spend part of his time in London in discussions with the Legal Advisers and other Departments. Since he would therefore have to divide his time between the Gulf and the United Kingdom even if he were nominally appointed permanently to the Gulf, there would not be any serious advantage over the present arrangement.

8. I entirely agree that the Orders in Council should be simplified and made more flexible.

9. It would be interesting to have the comments of a Commission of legal experts on the present and the future legal situation in the Gulf but I am inclined to doubt whether we should really get full value from such a visit. The conditions and the stages of legal and judicial development in the various territories are so different that it will always be difficult to have a fully consistent and coherent policy. In fact I think we have erred in the past by trying too hard to have one. The most useful thing that visitors could do would be to draw analogies with other Arab and Moslem countries or colonial territories which had passed or were passing through similar stages of development, but I rather doubt if there are many parallels sufficiently close to be of practical use in formulating policy here. I would have no objection at all to a visit of the kind discussed in Mr. Riches' letter. I simply doubt whether it would be worth the trouble and expense involved. The outline of objectives which will emerge from Mr. Riches' letter and this despatch would, I think, provide as much general guidance as it is feasible in the circumstances to obtain.

10. As regards jurisdiction, I fully agree that the time has come for further transfers from our jurisdiction to that of the local Courts. In addition to the reasons advanced in Mr. Riches' letter there is one which has come forcibly to my mind in the course of recent events here. This is that we frequently urge the Rulers of Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar to impose more effective control over the entry of foreigners, by which we usually mean foreign Arabs, into their territories and over their activities while they are here, and we have recently had to press for some of them to be removed from a territory in which they had carried on subversive activities. It is surely inconsistent for us to do this when in a number of cases the categories of persons concerned are subject to our jurisdiction and not that of the Rulers. Moreover, it will often be the case that the procedure for securing the departure of an undesirable individual will be more expeditious under the local jurisdiction than under our own, which may have an important bearing on the security situation. (One of the leaders of the disturbance in Qatar on August 16 was an Egyptian who was already under an order to leave from the Political Agent's Court, the period of which had not yet expired.) I therefore agree that we should now bring Bahrain and Qatar up to the level of Kuwait in the matter of jurisdiction. There is the further question whether, once we are making this change, we should go the whole way and transfer to the Rulers of Bahrain, Kuwait and Qatar those additional categories whose transfer in Kuwait was approved in your despatch to me No. 24 (EA 1641/3) of February 27. This transfer was authorised to be made if the Ruler again reverted to the question of jurisdiction. Her Majesty's Political Agency, Kuwait, would now like to have authority to make the transfer whenever they thought fit, even if the Ruler did not raise the matter again. I have no strong feelings whether we should make this additional transfer in all three States at the same time as we bring Bahrain and Qatar up to the present Kuwait level or whether we should keep it in hand in all three as a further concession to be made when a good opportunity occurs and I shall be glad to know whether you have any decided views on this point.

11. I would like to urge, however, that we should at the same time take the opportunity to put all questions of jurisdiction firmly on the basis of nationality as opposed to religion. According to the existing arrangement we have ceded jurisdiction to the Ruler of Kuwait over stateless Moslems of Palestinian origin, thus keeping for our own jurisdiction stateless Christians of Palestinian origin.

This seems now to be a quite unnecessary and undesirable distinction when we have already conceded jurisdiction over all Lebanese, bearing in mind that there is a much higher proportion of Christians in the Lebanon than there was in Arab Palestine. A further practical disadvantage of the use of religion as a criterion is that religion can be changed more easily than national origin. I would therefore recommend that all future transfers should be expressed strictly in terms of nationalities or national origins and that we should transfer in Bahrain and Qatar all stateless persons of Palestinian origin and that a similar correction should be made in Kuwait as soon as any other transfer of jurisdiction is made there. I assume that when reference is made in Mr. Riches' letter to "subjects of foreign Moslem Governments" this is intended merely as an abbreviated description for purposes of correspondence and that in actual instruments of transfer and in future Orders in Council each country would be specified by name. I agree that we should not give up jurisdiction over Pakistanis or British subjects from Aden Colony and persons from such parts of British Somaliland as qualify as British subjects. (I have enquired in previous correspondence who such persons are.) I see no objection to the transfer to the local jurisdiction of British Protected Persons. I should be glad to receive instructions on this whole question of the transfer of jurisdiction at your earliest convenience.

12. I am sending copies of this despatch to all Gulf posts.

I have, &c.

B. A. B. BURROWS.

EA 1399/5

No. 11

TRANSFER OF KHOR KUWAI NAVAL BASE TO MUSCAT AUTHORITIES

Sir Bernard Burrows to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received October 8)

(No. 111. Confidential)

Bahrain,

October 2, 1956.

Sir,

With reference to your telegram No. 993 of September 24, I have the honour to report that the naval base on the Jazirat al Ghanam in the Khor Kuwai was handed over to the Muscat authorities on September 26.

2. The Senior Naval Officer in the Persian Gulf and Mr. W. J. Adams, Third Secretary on my staff, travelled to Khor Kuwai on board H.M.S. *Loch Fada*. On the way there they picked up the Wali of Khassab, in whose province the Jazirat al Ghanam is situated, and two officials from the Ministry of the Interior of Muscat and Oman, Abdulla bin Hillal Shaksi and Ahmed Sinjook. The Wali was at first reluctant to make the journey at once as he wanted to wait for two days until a launch, which was being sent for his use from Muscat, had arrived. He was, however, persuaded to embark, partly by the promise of a penicillin injection by the ship's doctor for his son who was suffering from a feverish cold, and appeared to enjoy the rest of the proceedings.

3. On arrival at the Jazirat al Ghanam H.M.S. *Loch Fada* provided a naval guard and H.M.S. *Loch Killiesport*, which had arrived there independently on her way into the Gulf, a marine guard. When these had been formed up around the flagstaff the guards were inspected by the Wali; Mr. Adams delivered an address in Arabic and English, and the Wali made a brief and civil reply to the effect that he was grateful to the Royal Navy for all the honour done to him, and that he would report all the events of the day to the Sultan. After that H.M.S. *Loch Fada* fired a twenty-one gun salute while the Union Jack was lowered and the flag of the Sultan raised. Then the party returned to H.M.S. *Loch Fada* where light refreshments were served.

4. Later the Wali returned to the island where he had decided to stay for a couple of days in order to make a survey of his new possessions. He wanted a list prepared of all the effects on the island and the caretaker was instructed to do this. It was at the same time explained to the Wali that there were still some naval stores on the island which the Navy would wish to remove in the near future.

5. The ceremony clearly made a favourable impression on the Muscati officials. The Wali, who is a cousin of the Sultan, remarked at one stage that although the base was being handed over to the Sultanate this was of no practical importance as it was all "daulat wahid," one State.

6. I am sending a copy of this despatch to Her Majesty's Consulate in Muscat and to the Senior Naval Officer in the Persian Gulf.

I have, &c.

B. A. B. BURROWS.

EA 10110/10

No. 12

SITUATION IN QATAR

Sir Bernard Burrows to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received October 26)(No. 117. Confidential)
Sir,*Bahrain.**October 22, 1956.*

I have the honour to report on the present situation and recent developments in Qatar. This territory has until recently been troubled by nothing more than occasional quarrels within the ruling family about how the oil revenue should be divided between them, and occasional outbreaks of minor labour trouble among the oil company workers. The structure of the State has consisted during recent years of the following elements:—The ruling family are normally divided into three main factions: the Ruler and his son, Ahmed; the Beni Ahmed, a large and obstreperous clan descended from the eldest son of the founder of the dynasty some four generations ago, but who have never provided a Ruler; and the Beni Hamad, the sons of the Ruler's brother, Hamad bin Abdullah, who was destined to succeed his father but died prematurely, thereby opening the way for the present Ruler to succeed. It is this third branch which in the person of Khalifah bin Hamad claim to provide the next Ruler after the present one, allegedly in virtue of an arrangement made when the present Ruler succeeded. In the background of the shifting allegiances and recriminations of these three factions lurks the old father of the present Ruler, Abdullah bin Jasim, now aged about 88 and more than half paralysed, but who is still capable of weaving intrigues of various kinds and whose unconcealed preference for Hamad has contributed to the Ruler's lack of confidence, moodiness and occasional outbursts of passion. Next comes the Government, consisting of the Adviser, Mr. Hancock, the Commandant of Police, Mr. Cochrane, and a number of other British officials who have created a not inefficient administrative machine out of nothing and have carried out a reasonable programme of economic development, more suited to the needs and circumstances of Qatar than some of the development that has been carried out for instance in Kuwait. The Ruler has considerable confidence in his British officials but it has never been possible to integrate them fully with the Ruler and the ruling family to form one Government consisting of the Sovereign and his administration as we would understand the term. This is particularly noticeable in the matters of security and finance. There is a quite large and well equipped police force but it is composed mostly of foreign Arabs with British officers and it has not hitherto had the necessary authority from the Ruler to deal with all security matters, particularly where members of his family or Qatari nationals are concerned. To deal with the latter he prefers to make use of his ex-slave bodyguard and irregular Bedu retainers. I shall be reverting to the security organisation at greater length below. As regards finance there is an effective budgetary system with close control of expenditure and proper audit arrangements so far as the funds allotted to the Government departments are concerned, but in addition to these a very large sum is allotted to the Ruler himself and this is spent without any accounting or budgeting, partly on the corps of retainers mentioned above, but largely in doles to the population and in increasing the amounts allocated in the official Civil List to the members of his family. But in case any comparison with Saudi Arabia springs to mind it should be pointed out that in sharp contrast with the state of affairs there the Qatar finances as a whole are in ample balance and a reasonable sum is being put away in reserves. The whole question of the future trend of budgeting and investment is due to be considered now in the light of information recently received from the Iraq Petroleum Company that the known oil reserves will at the rate of production due to be reached next year be exhausted in about twenty years' time. The next element to be listed is that of the Darwish family. Abdullah Darwish has for many years held the official position of Ruler's representative for dealings with the oil companies. In addition to this he is by far the most important merchant in Qatar and is used by the Ruler as a general representative and intermediary on practically all matters of government and administration. One of his brothers is Director of the Education Department. Abdullah Darwish, though of very humble origin and practically no education, is one of the outstanding men in the Persian Gulf and would hold his own with politicians and business men from a much wider area. He is animated by ambition

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almost to the point of megalomania, love of gain, loyalty to the Ruler and, in spite of constant bickerings with the Iraq Petroleum Company, friendship to the United Kingdom. (It is unprofitable to speculate to what extent the motives of this friendship may be interested; its existence is real enough.) Then there are a group of lesser merchants, many of them chafing under the monopolistic pressure of the Darwish but latterly beginning to obtain more business from the Government and the oil companies. Even the mass of the Qataris are in a somewhat privileged position. They have first choice of any employment that is going; they receive the Ruler's doles and they have hitherto been leniently treated in all matters of security. Beyond them is a floating collection of foreigners from the Gulf and outside who are in some cases necessary to do jobs too technical or too menial for the Qataris but are disliked both by the authorities and the Qataris and provide the usual source of disturbance and subversion. Among these last special mention should be made of the Egyptian and other foreign Arab school teachers who are being brought into Qatar in increasing numbers, and whose influence can hardly fail to tend towards the break-up of the feudal régime and to raise questions about the relationship between Qatar and the United Kingdom.

2. There has been virtually no constitutional development in Qatar. A Municipal Council was appointed some time ago and functioned for a while. It came to an end and another Council has since been appointed, but appears to function very little as such, though normal municipal administration is carried on to some extent by the permanent officials of the municipality. There is no regular method of consultation even with the other members of the family. Normally the Ruler is glad to see as little of them as possible. They flock around him when they want more money or when some critical event occurs. It has been known for some little time that there was a group of people in Qatar who under the guise of an "Islamic Library" were meeting to discuss grievances and the desirability of reforms and who used such rare opportunities as afforded to give vent to anti-Western and anti-British feelings. There is some reason to believe that the chief spokesman of the Beni Ahmed, Nasir bin Khalid, and one or two members of the powerful Attiyah family, which is related by marriage to the ruling family, became associated, probably quite loosely, with some of this group. At the same time there was growing anger against the power of the Darwish not only on the part of the less successful merchants, but on the part of most of the ruling family other than the Ruler, including his son Ahmed, on account of the preponderant and obvious influence which Abdullah Darwish exercised over the Ruler. This influence, while often most tiresome to the Iraq Petroleum Company, was generally used in favour of the British connexion and the British officials in the Government. Abdullah for this reason became the target of the nationalists as well as of those who found his trading methods too sharp for them. There thus grew up a kind of coalition of those with grievances, consisting basically of a jealous and disaffected faction of the ruling family and a reformist-nationalist group resembling in embryo those known to us in Bahrain and Kuwait, associated so far as hostility to the Darwish carried them with much wider sections of feeling both in the ruling family and outside. The targets of this group or groups were the autocratic nature of the régime, the Darwish, and "imperialism." The logical connexion between these three objects of their hostility is perhaps not very clear, but the combination was clearly useful in providing targets to suit many tastes and to fit with changing developments. The Darwish were unpopular with quite a lot of people; we were unpopular with some, much fewer, people on general Middle Eastern political grounds, because a nationalist-reformist movement has to be anti-imperialist, and because we could easily be represented as being behind the autocratic power of the Ruler; it was unprofitable and perhaps dangerous to attack the Ruler directly; it was until the development of the Suez situation somewhat pointless to attack us in Qatar directly; the Darwish provided a local and more vulnerable objective on which the greatest degree of criticism could be concentrated. It was successful to the extent that Abdullah Darwish left Qatar early in the summer, intending even then to stay away for some time in the hope that the storm would blow over. It was not until Nasser showed the way that open hostility was switched to ourselves. This analysis is probably much too schematic and omits in the interests of brevity many of the personal factors which often play a more important part than the political ones.

3. It will probably never be possible to unravel exactly which of the associated groups of malcontents were primarily responsible for the demonstration and

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disturbance of August 16 when a procession purporting merely to shout pro-Egyptian slogans was diverted to an attack on Her Majesty's Political Agency. In spite of assurances the Ruler and his son Ahmed, who had been acting for him at the time, took inadequate action to deal with those involved in the actual disturbance. The Ruler became more and more preoccupied with family troubles, partly because of the incident in the Lebanon when one of his more unbalanced sons threatened Abdullah Darwish's life and partly because of renewed importunity by the Beni Ahmed with regard to their allowances. Moreover he felt increasingly lost without the support on which he had chiefly relied for so many years in all matters of government, namely that of Abdullah Darwish. The Ruler's son Ahmed during his period in control earlier in the summer while the Ruler was in Europe had made less and less secret of his hostility to the Darwish. The Lebanon incident was the last straw and Abdullah Darwish has wisely not dared to show his face in Qatar again. It must be regarded as doubtful whether he will for a considerable time feel secure enough to do so. All this led the Ruler to talk of abdicating or making a partial withdrawal from public life, leaving affairs in the hands of Ahmed. The latter showed no more disposition than during the summer to take a firm grip and to institute the necessary security measures and things seemed to be drifting rather dangerously when a further spin of the wheel was given by the incident on the night of October 12 when shots were fired into the house of Mohammed bin Othman, the Director of Customs, who is related by marriage to the Darwish family. The precise history of this incident is also wrapped in mystery. The firing, which now turns out to have consisted of only a few pistol shots, was carefully directed at the only room in the house which was not occupied, and, according to one theory, the bullets have a suspicious resemblance to some known previously to be in the possession of the owner of the house. However this may be, the affair had a galvanising effect on the Ruler who, as already reported by telegram, had a number of people arrested, not because he could prove they had anything to do with the shooting, but because they were known leaders of opposition and agitation after having them flogged and in one case at least participating himself in the operation, put them in prison where they still are. He also had one or more angry meetings with the Beni Ahmed on whom he tried, without much success, to pin complicity in this and other disturbances. He was not supported in this attempt by his son Ahmed, who is connected by marriage with the Beni Ahmed, and who advised against strong measures being taken against them. At this point the Ruler had apparently had a further attack of depression, talked further of abdicating, and withdrew all his money in rupee notes from the Banks. He then, as already reported, invited me to go to Doha and visit him with great urgency. I went on the same day, October 14. After a preliminary conversation, at which Ahmed and Khalifah bin Hamad were present and apparently on the best of terms with each other, the Ruler invited me to return later in the day to a meeting with the rest of his family. There were present on this occasion some twenty of the leading members of the Beni Ahmed, with other minor branches of the family, and one or two of the Ruler's uncles and brothers. The course of the meeting was extremely hard to follow as there were usually several of the participants shouting at the same time, most of them in atrociously bedu Arabic. The general drift seems to have been that the Ruler began by expressing his displeasure at the attitude of the rest of his family represented there and saying that he was determined that public security should be maintained and that he was giving instructions to the police accordingly. The Beni Ahmed replied that they kept on being asked to meetings and having vague accusations made against them which could not be substantiated and they did not see any purpose in going on like this. Ahmed then took everyone by surprise by launching into a vehement denunciation of several known trouble-makers among the Beni Ahmed and those known to be connected with them. This appeared to produce a considerable effect. A diversion was caused at one point by a hysterical and almost wholly unintelligible outburst from Saud bin Abdullah, the formerly quasi-independent patriarch of Wakrah who has in the past been in trouble with us over his attempts to tamper with a navigation mark, and who on this occasion appeared to be critical of Mr. Cochrane, the Commandant of Police. After this there was a period of silence and then Nasir bin Khalid, followed by most of the other prominent Beni Ahmed, got up and shook the Ruler's hand and made effusive expressions of fealty and submission. The Beni Hamad were not present at this meeting, either because they were not thought by the Ruler to be involved in the disaffection which he was trying to combat or because they preferred to stay on the sidelines ready to throw their weight later on to whichever side appeared the most likely to be able to reciprocate the benefit.

4. In a subsequent conversation with me the Ruler seemed well pleased with the results of the family meeting. He said he had wished me to be there to show the Beni Ahmed that he could count on our support (also, I suspect, to show me what he had to put up with from the rest of his family). He would never forget my coming so quickly to his help. We had a long discussion on the additional security measures which ought to be taken, under three main headings, the increase in the authority of the police, arms and immigration. It was as usual difficult to pin the Ruler down to specific measures. He said that he had now made it amply clear to all concerned that the police were responsible for security generally and he did not think any Government notice to this effect was required. He admitted that it would still be difficult for them to deal directly with a member of the ruling family but hoped that in due course they might be able to do so. He still had no practical solution for the difficulty of getting Qataris to enter the police force but wanted to improve the organisation of his own bodyguard by equipping them with British rifles instead of the miscellaneous collection of arms which they now have. As regards British support, the Ruler was most anxious that I should reiterate to him our readiness to send British forces if required as soon as he asked for them. I gave an assurance that we would do so. I had previously learnt that earlier in the day the Ruler had apparently intended to ask that we should station British forces in Qatar permanently and that this had been opposed by his son Ahmed. As it turned out the Ruler did not make this request and only wished to be reassured that help was nearby. Before leaving Bahrain I had arranged for a frigate of the Royal Navy to be off the east coast of Qatar by the morning of the next day and I told the Ruler that I thought it might be a useful demonstration for this ship to put in at Umm Said or Doha for a visit. He preferred that the visit should be to Doha and this was accordingly arranged. He also asked for help in procuring other military equipment for the police force, the details of which I have mentioned in separate correspondence. I said that I thought the first thing required in order to establish better control over the ruling family would be to reduce the number of arms which they held and imported. The Ruler said that most of the arms which they bought in the Lebanon were useless and indeed dangerous to the owners. (Mr. Cochrane subsequently confirmed to me that there had been a number of accidents with these weapons.) The Ruler did not think it feasible for the personal baggage of members of the ruling family to be searched for arms when they arrived at Doha but he thought reports of the quantities imported were greatly exaggerated and that the police were amply able to cope with any armed opposition, particularly if they obtained the new equipment which he wanted for them. The Ruler fully accepted my recommendation that there should be better control over the entry and residence of foreigners. He said that Palestinians, Lebanese, Somalis and Indians were particularly dangerous and that he wished for the strongest action to be taken to prevent them entering or residing in Qatar without the necessary permits. He was not, however, so categorical about the arrival of people from the Trucial States and Muscat who he said might be admitted if they were going to be of use as workers in Qatar. The Ruler also asked whether we could help him by providing a place to which he could send any member of his family whose presence in Qatar was dangerous to security. I told the Ruler that we had previously had under consideration the possibility that Aden might be used for this purpose, but that in present circumstances this would have to be ruled out. I would however enquire whether any other destination could be suggested.

5. I subsequently discussed the application of new security measures with Mr. Hancock and Mr. Cochrane and I think it may be hoped that there will be some improvement in the authority given to the police and particularly in the control of foreigners even though we are handicapped in that respect by the weaknesses of our own legislative powers for dealing with people under our jurisdiction, to which I have referred in other correspondence. I learned in this connexion that Shaikh Ahmed had made the point with regard to the proposed removal of some of the participants in the August 16 disturbance who were subject to our jurisdiction that it would be a mistake to try them for not having residence permits as we had proposed, when in fact their deportation was required for quite a different reason, i.e., participation in subversive activity. This remark may be in part no more than a rationalisation of Shaikh Ahmed's normal inertia, but there is a germ of truth in it as a comment on the inadequacy of our present legal powers in dealing with this kind of situation.

6. The next morning the Ruler unexpectedly asked to see me again before I left and said that he wished to make some increase in the allowances paid to the

other members of his family. This is an old story in which we have often become involved. (The last reference appears to be my letter to Mr. Fry 1946/61/54 of September 15, 1954.) The Ruler said on this occasion that the Beni Ahmed in particular were reviving their old claim that no less than a quarter of the total revenue should be allocated to the family. The Ruler was refusing to discuss the matter on this basis but felt that individual increases, which I gathered from the examples he mentioned would amount to something like 30 per cent., should be made. He justified the proposal partly on the grounds of the higher cost of living, partly because it had already become known that oil production was to be increased by a considerable amount in six months' time, but largely on political grounds that he believed that the trouble which the Beni Ahmed had been making was basically derived from their wish for more money and their chagrin at his earlier refusals of it. It is entirely characteristic of the Ruler's tactics and general outlook on life that he should in almost the same breath threaten the recalcitrant members of his family with drastic security measures and attempt to appease them by extra payments of money. The Ruler pressed me to agree there and then to this increase. I said that the pressing financial problem so far as Qatar was concerned was to work out the programme of Government expenditure over the next twenty years since it now appeared that the oil resources of the State would be exhausted at the end of that time and it would be necessary to live thereafter on the income derived from reserves which would have been accumulated meanwhile. The whole question of the Civil List should be looked at in that broader context. The Ruler said that he had tried to take this line with his relations but they all replied that they did not mind what happened in twenty years' time provided they got more money now. I had previously discussed the question of these allowances with Mr. Hancock, who felt that they were not of great budgetary importance compared with the much larger sums which the family receive from the Ruler's share of the revenue, and that it would be unwise to take too rigid a line with regard to them. Having his attitude in mind, and the further thought that the longer the increases in the allowances were delayed the higher they would have to be, I said that if the Ruler really felt increases to be necessary in order to achieve political stability I did not want to stand in his way, provided that the increases were of fixed sums such as he had mentioned and were not stated in terms of a proportion of revenue. The Ruler heartily agreed with this proviso, and said he would send me a list of the detailed increases proposed. The Ruler also said that he would be obliged in the (Moslem) financial year which has just begun to take a few lakhs of rupees from the Government revenue to add to his own privy purse since he was finding it difficult to make both ends meet. He has apparently done this in the past financial year. I propose as soon as possible to discuss with Mr. Hancock the whole question of budgetary and investment policy on a long-term basis and it will no doubt then be necessary to make representations to the Ruler with a view to keeping expenditure within bounds in view of the comparatively limited time for which the oil income will be available.

7. A further interesting feature was that on the morning of October 12 the Ruler asked Saleh al Man'a, who was then in Beirut, to return immediately to Qatar. This man was until about five years ago the Ruler's representative with the oil company and had many of the other functions later assumed by Abdullah Darwish. He is of a respectable merchant family of Nejd origin and he was found by us to be generally helpful in our dealings with Qatar when he was in power. He arrived during the day and came into the family meeting which I have described above and later was present at a small dinner to which Shaikh Ahmed invited me. His reappearance suggests that the Ruler is at least thinking of reinstating him in his previous position or making use of him in some way in the administration. If so this would further suggest that the Ruler may have reconciled himself to the continuing absence of Abdullah Darwish. It may even be possible, to press the speculation still further, that there was an explicit or tacit agreement between the Ruler and the rest of his family that in return for their submission and acceptance of the new security measures he would no longer press for the return of Abdullah Darwish. The latter is still at Dammam in Saudi Arabia and appears still to believe, probably rightly, that it is not yet safe for him to reappear in Doha. The reinstatement of Saleh would be quite acceptable from our point of view and the oil company would no doubt have a much more comfortable life. But he has not a tenth of the drive or rapid comprehension of Abdulla Darwish; he is said to have been indulging while in Beirut in pursuits unsuited to his advancing years; and he may well prove not to be capable of dealing with the present volume of business which has greatly increased since he was last in control.

8. The question will naturally and properly be asked whether it can really be hoped to ensure the continued stability of Qatar for any long period simply by means of more rigorous security measures, coupled with the distribution of larger sums of money out of the increasing oil revenues, and whether it is not becoming essential that some beginning should be made with political reform or some means sought of broadening the base of the Government. In Bahrain some degree of reform has been granted at the same time as the efficiency of the police has been increased and the result up to the present has been satisfactory in that the influence of extremist elements has been reduced and moderates have been encouraged by both these factors to rally to the Government's support. In Kuwait a move towards "democracy" was tried twenty years ago and failed. The autocratic system of government has proved unexpectedly resilient, due largely to the vigorous character of the Shaikhs and to the fairly wide distribution of prosperity but there are distinct rumblings under the surface and some observers believe that the time for reform is rapidly approaching if an explosion is to be avoided. Neither of these parallels exactly fits the case of Qatar. It is a much more primitive community than either Bahrain or Kuwait. The Shaikhs, while almost excessively vigorous, are much more undisciplined and less experienced than those in Kuwait. There is as yet very little moderate opinion of the kind represented by the senior merchants and Government officials in Bahrain. Moreover the political movement, though potentially tiresome, has not at present got anything like the organisational capacity of the Committee of National Union in its earlier days in Bahrain or connexions with older nationalistic movements in the rest of the Middle East which characterise and strengthen the reformist groups in Kuwait. It is probable that if Abdullah Darwish remains outside Qatar and if consequently the predominance of his commercial activities is reduced the other merchants may grow more prosperous and more influential and may provide a group which it would be to the advantage of the Government to bring to its side if necessary by beginning to give them some share in governmental or administrative responsibility. A revived Municipal Council would probably be the best way to begin and if the situation quieters down I propose to go into the possibility of development along these lines with Mr. Hancock and eventually, subject to his views, with the Ruler. The other main requirement is greater equality before the law. Up to now there has been one law, or rather absence of law, for the Shaikhs and another for the rest. The Ruler has clearly begun to see that this is dangerous, even if only for his own position, but it is too early yet to see whether there will be any practical progress towards bringing the Shaikhs under regular control. Here again we shall probably have to do a good deal of prodding. Another important factor is the general attitude of the oil company (the Qatar Petroleum Company). Hitherto it has been so busy resisting Abdullah Darwish's encroachments on its concession that it has not had much time or inclination to make itself an accepted and integral part of the local scene as the Kuwait Oil Company and to a lesser extent the Bahrain Petroleum Company have begun to do. A change of general attitude in this respect by the Qatar Petroleum Company, and particularly a radical improvement of their public relations policy, might have a most beneficial effect on affairs in Qatar even outside the normal limits of oil company operations. So far as can be judged at present I fear it would be unwise to look much further ahead than this and I do not believe that a more thorough-going programme of reform even if the Ruler could be persuaded to adopt it, which I doubt, would contribute to the improvement of conditions in the country or to the maintenance of the present relationship between Qatar and Her Majesty's Government.

9. Since the above was drafted and as the bag is on the point of closing I have received later news from Mr. Hancock to the effect that opinion, both on the part of the Ruler and of the local business community in Doha, has further hardened against Abdullah Darwish and that the Ruler has said that he wishes to replace him as his representative with the oil companies and to cancel the Government purchasing agreement in virtue of which Abdullah Darwish receives a handsome commission on all Government purchases. Mr. Hancock thinks it unlikely that Saleh al Man'a or any other Qatari will be appointed as representative with the oil companies in place of Darwish. The Ruler appears to want a foreigner to be appointed. If these decisions are maintained it will mean that Abdullah Darwish will have to remain outside Qatar at least for a long time to come, but that the activities of his firm, other than the purchasing agreement, can continue, though on a reduced scale, under the control of his two brothers who remain for the time being in Qatar.

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10. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Cairo, Baghdad, Tehran, Beirut, Damascus, Jedda and Amman, to the Governor of Aden, the Commander-in-Chief, East Indies, the Air Officer Commanding, Aden, and Gulf posts, and to the Political Office with the Middle East Forces.

I have, &c.

B. A. B. BURROWS.

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EA 1642/19

No. 13

JURISDICTION IN THE PERSIAN GULF

Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Sir Bernard Burrows (Bahrain)

(No. 151. Confidential)
Sir,

Foreign Office,
November 21, 1956.

I have further considered the question of the transfer to the Rulers' courts of jurisdiction over certain Muslim foreigners in the Shaikhdoms of the Persian Gulf which was discussed in your letter No. 1642/5/7/56 of August 13 to Mr. Riches, and in paragraphs 10 and 11 of your despatch No. 107 of September 17.

2. It will not be possible for several weeks at least to arrive at a decision on the transfer of jurisdiction over persons from the British Somaliland Protectorate. Without such a decision your Excellency may consider that it would be preferable not to discuss with the Ruler of Kuwait the transfer of jurisdiction over persons in the other categories concerned. Nevertheless, if you consider that it would be advantageous in present circumstances to open discussions with the Ruler, you are authorised to give effect to the decisions set forth below.

3. It has been decided that the nationals of certain predominantly Muslim States, and inhabitants of certain Muslim territories, shall be transferred to the jurisdiction of the Rulers in Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar. Transfers will be made on the basis of national status, and not of religion. No British subjects will be transferred.

4. The categories to be thus transferred are as follows:—

- (a) Nationals of Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Afghanistan, Indonesia and Sudan;
- (b) "Protected" persons from the Aden Protectorate, French Somaliland Protectorate, Italian Trust Territory of Somalia;
- (c) Stateless persons of Palestinian origin not already under the Ruler's jurisdiction.

5. In addition to persons from the Somaliland Protectorate, whose position is still under consideration, certain other categories have been excluded from the list in paragraph 4 above for the reasons given below. Nationals of Pakistan are excluded because the Ruler of Kuwait has always acknowledged that, as citizens of a full member of the Commonwealth, they occupy a special position. The Federation of Malaya will almost certainly shortly become a similar member of the Commonwealth and it is to be hoped that the Ruler will similarly accord Malays a special position. Persons from certain British territories containing a significant proportion of Muslims, e.g., Zanzibar, Brunei and the Kenya Protectorate, are excluded because, although the difficulties of transfer are no greater than those arising in the case of persons from the British Somaliland Protectorate, the numbers concerned are likely to be insignificant, whereas those from the British Somaliland Protectorate form a large proportion of the classes over which the Ruler desires to extend his jurisdiction.

6. I do not contemplate the surrender of jurisdiction over Turkish nationals. While Turkey may be regarded as a Muslim State it is set apart by its long and increasing association with Europe.

7. The authorisation given in paragraph 2 above will also extend to the Kuwait Neutral Zone as well as to Kuwait proper. You may now authorise Her Majesty's Political Agent in Kuwait to approach the Ruler as proposed in Mr. Riches's letter No. EA 1641/11 of July 26 to Mr. Gault. In present circumstances I do not propose to arrange for the Saudi Government to be informed when the Regulation has been made.

8. Authority to transfer to the Rulers of Bahrain and Qatar of jurisdiction over the categories listed in paragraph 4 above connotes authority for the transfer also of those other classes of persons who are already within the jurisdiction of the Ruler of Kuwait but who have hitherto been reserved to the jurisdiction of Her Majesty's Government in Bahrain and Qatar.

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9. Please inform me as early as possible of your decision whether or not to approach the Rulers of Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar in this matter and, if you do decide to approach them, your intention regarding the timing of the several approaches. Your Excellency's inability to convey to the Rulers any decision affecting persons from the British Somaliland Protectorate might be set against the credit to be gained with the Rulers at a time when Her Majesty's Government have been compelled to draw heavily upon their goodwill.

10. [I should also like to have your views on whether the classes of British protected persons included in paragraphs 4 and 5 of this despatch should be transferred to the jurisdiction of His Highness the Sultan in Muscat and Oman.] I assume that no changes of the kind envisaged above are at present either necessary or desirable in the Trucial States.

11. I am sending a copy of this despatch to the Political Agents in Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Dubai and to Her Majesty's Consul-General in Muscat.

I have, &c.

D. M. H. RICHES.

EA 10113/50

No. 14

REACTIONS IN THE PERSIAN GULF STATES AND MUSCAT TO THE ANGLO-FRENCH ACTION IN EGYPT

Sir Bernard Burrows to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received November 29)

(No. 127. Confidential)

Bahrain,

Sir,

November 23, 1956.

I have the honour to submit a narrative account of the immediate repercussion which occurred in the Persian Gulf States as a result of Her Majesty's Government's action in Egypt from October 31 onwards. The impact of the Egyptian crisis on the various States, though differing widely in intensity from the disorders of Bahrain to the bazaar rumours and partly favourable comment of Muscat, was felt in at least some measure throughout the area and was perhaps the first international event since 1948 to have had this general effect. Nevertheless the interaction of events between the Shaikhdoms was very slight and I shall therefore relate this account State by State.

2. The first reaction in Bahrain as in Kuwait and amongst politically conscious elements in Qatar was one of puzzled shock. This was accompanied by a suspicion that this might be the Imperialist-Zionist plot that had so long been prophesied by Egyptian propaganda. The period of shock in Bahrain lasted for most of the morning of November 1. During that morning oil company labour worked as normal and most shops and businesses opened at the usual time only to close, however, within an hour or so as the news from Egypt became more universally known. At first the only conspicuous sign of public disapproval of Anglo-French policy was the appearance in the streets of groups of schoolboys chanting anti-imperialist slogans. Later in the afternoon, however, this disapproval spread to other classes and age groups and a small crowd made an attack on a block of flats on the outskirts of Muharraq rented by the B.O.A.C. This building is conspicuous as being virtually the only European residential accommodation in Muharraq outside the Royal Air Force compound. The police found difficulty in dispersing this crowd and were obliged to summon their main riot squad from Manama who fought their way to the flats through a crowd of some 400 persons who had formed at the notorious causeway corner and along the airport road. The clearance was accomplished by the use of tear gas. Soon afterwards the B.O.A.C. families were evacuated from their flats which were put under guard. During the latter part of the afternoon the airport road in Muharraq again became completely impassable, but it was hoped that the police would be able to clear it. No shots were fired by the police that day. As for our own security arrangements for Bahrain, a company of Camerons arrived in Awali from Aden that day to reinforce the two companies of Glosters already stationed in the island.

3. The attitude of the Ruler of Bahrain when I called on him that morning was calm enough. He promised to do his utmost to keep order but also agreed to the intervention of British forces to assist his police if the situation got out of hand and the police asked for help. Although he took the conventional line of deploring the Israeli aggression and later sent me a message asking why Her Majesty's Government had taken no action against the Israeli army, he shed no tears for Egypt. No doubt during the past few years he has come to regard the international influence of Egypt on Bahrain as being almost as great a threat to his own position as it is to ours. He also significantly contrasted the local Bahraini situation with that in Egypt indicating that in his view firm action at a much earlier stage against the forces of nationalism would have done much to check the trouble in both cases.

4. The Committee of National Union acted true to expectations by calling a strike for sundown that evening and by issuing a pamphlet calling upon the Ruler to demonstrate his sympathy for "Arabism" by joining with the people to oppose the British. Privately, however, the C.N.U. intimated that the strike would last one day only since they realised that a general strike would damage the economic interests of their country and would not materially assist their Egyptian patron. It should be noticed that Al Bakir, the Secretary of the C.N.U., used the Public Relations Department of Bahrain Petroleum Company and not,

as during the March riots, the British Information Office, as a means of communicating the intentions of the Committee to ourselves. Ostensibly because since the Nationalist quarrel was with Britain and France they had no objection in principle to an American company, though I suspect that this method of approach was employed because the Residency and the Bahrain Agency had deliberately avoided any contact with the C.N.U. for several months past. Al Bakir also approached the Bahrain Government for permission to organise a procession on the following day. As the Government had already reissued an old order prohibiting casual demonstrations and processions but making provision for authorised processions with police escort and agreed routing arrangements, Al Bakir was granted permission subject to such conditions. The Ruler had already expressed his approval of this concession.

5. Throughout the morning of November 2 the police cleared road blocks on the airport road, but the troublemakers of Muharraq showed equal diligence in restoring them and eventually the police decided that the task of keeping the road free was disproportionately onerous. The Local Defence Committee which met that morning decided that the introduction of British forces was unnecessary at this stage. Later in the day a Muharraq mob made another assault on the B.O.A.C. flats and set fire to the garage. It is reported that watchmen, but not the police, fired a few shots at this crowd. Meanwhile, the authorised procession a few hundred strong, took place more or less as planned though it caused some damage to property in its wake by setting fire to a number of petrol pumps and to the premises occupied by African and Eastern (Near East) Limited, a Unilever subsidiary. There were also other small fires and some stoning of British-owned premises. The procession passed the Agency on its return to Muharraq but it was moved on by the police and dispersed satisfactorily. The day had passed without any other serious acts of violence or threats to security but it later became apparent that the extremist elements had been restrained from immediate excess rather than discouraged from committing future outrages.

6. In fact as a result of the lawlessness of that day the police had made five arrests in Muharraq including one prominent member of the C.N.U., Ibrahim Fakroo. The C.N.U. made this an excuse to threaten the continuance of the strike and issued an unusually abusive pamphlet to that effect. Consciously or unconsciously, however, the C.N.U. were nearing their hour of reckoning. During the day Shaikh Daij, the Ruler's youngest brother, one of the most practical and in some ways the most progressive of the prominent Al Khalifa, advocated the arrest of the C.N.U. leaders on the grounds that they had broken the undertaking about restraining their procession from unlawful action. It was clear, moreover, that he was thereby reflecting the long-held views of the Ruler and his family. It was also evident that the time had come to change our policy of persuading Shaikh Salman to show indulgence to the C.N.U. who, by their irresponsible and anarchical policy, had forfeited their claims to our political protection, and to give our wholehearted support to those who with all their faults and wrong attitudes are our oldest friends, and who by their very vulnerability are our most reliable allies in Bahrain.

7. The following morning began quietly but deteriorated rapidly. Several large fires were started by mobs causing extensive damage to the B.O.A.C. flats in Muharraq, to the Gray, Mackenzie slipway on the causeway and to the Bahrain Public Works Department headquarters, the offices of the *Al Khalij* newspaper and the Roman Catholic church and school in Manama. At 12.30 p.m. the Bahrain Government asked me to authorise the intervention of British forces in order to clear the streets around Manama so that the police could be left to deal with the bazaar. This was immediately done. At the same time a curfew was proclaimed for the municipalities of Manama, Muharraq and Hidd. At 3 p.m. a contingent of Glosters succeeded in clearing the Muharraq road which they began to patrol. The army accomplished their work without firing though the police were obliged to use Greener guns wounding several persons. They were also obliged to make a number of arrests as the curfew was poorly observed. Nevertheless, an ugly situation had been rapidly brought under control and confidence was further strengthened by the arrival of the advance party of the 1st battalion King's Shropshire Light Infantry, the whole of which was flown in by stages during the succeeding weeks and was joined by a Royal Engineers field squadron.

8. By the morning of November 4 the atmosphere had much improved; there was no serious incident that day and the police assisted by army patrols worked well. Police guards were placed on British business premises. The only minor trouble occurred when the sea road at Muharraq again became congested by crowds and the police had to disperse them with tear gas and Greener guns. As a result of this incident the curfew which had been lifted for two hours that morning was retained for the rest of the day. The C.N.U. confined themselves to issuing their third pamphlet of the crisis, containing the usual stream of abuse against the Adviser, advocating the boycott of British and French goods and ships, but disclaiming any connexion with the acts of hooliganism which had occurred.

9. November 5 passed without incident and there were some signs of a desire to return to work though the refusal of BAPCO to despatch buses made its realisation virtually impossible at least so far as Muharraq was concerned. Essential services in the town were maintained except for a partial curtailment of the Muharraq telephone service.

10. In the early hours of November 6 the decision to arrest the senior members of the C.N.U. which had already been discussed by the L.D.C. here and had been endorsed by the Foreign Office, was put into effect by the Bahrain Government. Those arrested were Abdul Rahman al Bakir, Abdul Aziz Shemlan, Abdulla al Aliwat and later that day, Ibrahim al Musa. At the same time their headquarters and houses were searched for incriminating papers. The day dawned without any overt political reaction to this move though a few anonymous pamphlets in type or manuscript, probably issued by the rump of the Committee, later appeared in Muharraq. The curfew was lifted for the entire afternoon.

11. So far as the Residency, the Agency and the Bahrain Government were concerned these internal political events were somewhat put in the shade on November 7 by the news received through BAPCO from Arabian American Oil Company that the Saudi Arabian Government had decided to manifest its sympathies with Egypt by cutting off the supply of crude oil from the mainland to the Sitra Refinery. This created a potentially most serious situation since the Dhahran field normally supplies six-sevenths of the crude oil processed in the refinery and the cessation of the oil flow created a threat that large numbers of BAPCO workers would shortly become redundant. The attempt to find substitute crude oil from other fields, which still continues, is not strictly relevant to this account though in one way and another the refinery has managed to employ all its workers up to date, but it is interesting to note that the Ruler of Qatar was unwilling to supply BAPCO with crude oil from the Qatar Petroleum Company, because he feared that this might stimulate protests in Qatar and that it was estimated that the Ruler of Kuwait, if approached, would reply in similar terms. Despite all this concern at an official level, however, there was little popular reaction to the new economic threat. In fact in Manama at least there was a considerable resumption of work though the feeling in Muharraq, less inflamed than formerly about the international issue, had been stirred up again by the arrest of the C.N.U. leaders. November 7 was also notable for the introduction by the Ruler of an abbreviated version of the Penal Code whose promulgation had been held up for over a year because of popular criticism, instigated by the C.N.U., of some of its sections.

12. It was not until November 10 that a positive move was made amongst the merchants led by the Chamber of Commerce, and prodded by Shaikh Daij, to reopen the Manama bazaar. By the 10th, also, BAPCO workers began to drift back and there was a 30 per cent. attendance by the morning of November 11. That morning, however, the process of restoring normal conditions received a temporary setback when a Muharraq gang, inspired no doubt by embittered C.N.U. supporters, crossed the causeway in an attempt to reimpose the strike on Manama. Fortunately the police and the army had received previous warnings of their intention and after a brief confusion in which a few stray and harmless shots were fired by the police, the mob dispersed. Nevertheless the bazaar had closed at the first sign of trouble and virtually no workers attended the BAPCO afternoon shift.

13. The bazaar fracas of November 11 was the last prominent incident in the crisis period, and since then the situation has returned slowly but steadily to normal. By November 15 employment attendance at BAPCO reached over

50 per cent. Since November 11, however, the police have been making further administrative arrests consisting of lesser members of the C.N.U. particularly those who are thought to have been advocating violent methods both before and during the present disturbances. There is no doubt that these arrests have contributed to the lessening of tension especially in Muharraq but some of those seized do not at first sight seem to fall within the category of rabble-rousers, and there is some possibility that the Al Khalifa are making good use of this opportunity to pay off old scores.

14. From the outset the Ruler of Kuwait and those Shaikhs and officials responsible for the direction of police and security were confident that the situation in Kuwait could be kept under control, and the Ruler indicated that no public meetings or demonstrations would be allowed. The Political Agent was assured of this by the Ruler on the morning of November 1 before the latter sailed for Failaka Island at midday. Shaikh Abdullah Mubarak, who had returned from a hunting expedition at the first news of the crisis, gave similar assurances and in general this assessment of the security position proved accurate. At 3 p.m. G.M.T. on November 1 conditions in the town and on the oilfield were completely normal. Nevertheless the Local Defence Committee had taken the precaution of ordering H.M.S. *Loch Insh*, frigate, from Basra, H.M.S. *Superb*, cruiser, with two companies of the Gloucestershire Regiment from the Trucial States and another frigate, H.M.S. *Loch Fyne*, with a military Tactical Headquarters on board, from Bahrain to proceed within three hours steaming time of Kuwait.

15. It was known that although the security arrangements were entirely satisfactory, political feeling in Kuwait was running extremely high and that the majority of Kuwaitis with any educational pretensions, including many prominent officials and some of the younger Shaikhs as well as all the large and influential expatriate Arab community, were strongly opposed to Her Majesty's Government's policy in Egypt. The first indication of this came on the morning of November 3, when a crowd tried to hold a mass meeting in a bazaar, thereby causing the shops to close. The meeting was easily dispersed by the police although some of the malcontents afterwards roamed the town, throwing stones at suitable targets. There were also pamphlets from the so-called "Committee of the Clubs" calling for an extension of the bazaar strike. The same day the general manager of the Kuwait Oil Company approached the Political Agent about the desirability of evacuating the European population of Ahmadi by tanker.

16. On the following day, November 4, all schools and nearly all shops were closed. Small crowds assembled in Kuwait town and in the Arab quarter of Ahmadi but were scattered rapidly. The "Committee of the Clubs" called for an end of strike action, and announced that their protests campaign would henceforth be on completely peaceful lines. Nevertheless the moral strength of the popular feeling and its effect on the Ruler was shown that morning when the Committee asked the Ruler's permission to collect funds for Egypt in Kuwait, to open offices to recruit volunteers for Egypt, to obtain the cancellation of British contracts with the Government and the boycott of British and French goods and customers in the bazaar, and to order the dismissal of British State employees. Although the Ruler refused outright to hear of the cancellation of contracts or the dismissal of British officials, he did accept the institution of a fund and recruiting offices, and said that the merchants might please themselves about the boycott. The popularity of these measures is proved by the fact that the fund has been organised on a semi-official basis and, by means of "voluntary" deductions of 10 or 14 days' pay from the salaries of all State officials, is understood to have reached almost £1 million; that between 1,000 and 2,000 recruits for the Egyptian Army have been registered, though none are likely to leave Kuwait and that the bazaar boycott still shows only very gradual signs of relaxation. November also saw the resignation of Colonel Quatemi, a Kuwaiti officer of the State police, and his action was followed on the 9th by 13 other officers, N.C.O.s. and civilian police officials. Four of these later withdrew their resignations.

17. Throughout November 5 and 6, the town remained tense but quiet. On the 6th boycott signs appeared in shops and in the streets. On November 9, the "Committee of the Clubs" and five prominent merchants organised a meeting of 60 other merchants which passed resolutions to bring about the cancellation of existing, and the refusal of new, British and French contracts, the transfer of Government funds from the British Bank of the Middle East to the Kuwait National

Bank and the boycott of 14 British and French insurance companies. Despite these brave words it appears that the merchants have, in fact, been hesitant to abandon their lucrative agencies.

18. I have attempted in this despatch to confine myself mainly to a narrative of events, since it is too early to assess the longer term consequences. Nevertheless, as regards Kuwait it is already clear that from the point of view of British interests, the intellectual and emotional impact of the crisis on educated and semi-educated Kuwaiti opinion was its most ominous aspect. Admittedly the Army and the Police, despite the resignations, stood firm behind the Ruler and the senior Shaikhs, who showed an unequivocal understanding of their common interest with Her Majesty's Government in maintaining order, and it appears that some of the greater merchants at least, after an initial flirtation with the "Committee of the Clubs," began to regard Abdulla Mubarak's resolute policy with a certain respect. It must be remembered, however, that the interest of the ruling family was common rather than identical on this occasion for of course the main motive for their actions was the preservation of their political absolutism which we would not normally, for reasons of constitutional progress, wish to endorse so completely. We have had to lean heavily on the support of this entrenched reactionary element, and we have lost touch with the younger Shaikhs and the better type of progressive official whom we have regarded as a vital bridge between the present régime and the reformists. It is to be hoped that we have not permanently lost the sympathies of this latter class, but it is depressing to hear that our action in Egypt seems so far not to have diminished the moral prestige of Nasser and that the circumstances of his defeat have excited compassion rather than contempt. Apart from all this we have also to consider the threat levelled at our economic interests by the attempt to obtain the cancellation of British contracts and by the boycott. No doubt the boycott will soon be lifted, but it will always remain a most dangerous precedent.

19. In Qatar at 11.30 p.m. on October 31, the Political Agent received Shaikh Ahmed, the Ruler's son, and informed him of the international situation. Shaikh Ahmed assured him that all necessary measures would be taken to preserve foreign persons and property. The Ruler at that time was absent in Rian. The Political Agent also spoke to the Adviser, the Commandant of Police and the managers of the oil companies and asked them to take security precautions with respect to their employees and installations. At 5 a.m. the following morning, security guards were mounted on essential installations and on the Agency. At 6.30 a.m. the Political Agent called on the Ruler. Shaikh Ahmed, the Adviser and the Commandant were also present. The Ruler's reaction to the Egyptian crisis was one of dismay. He expressed extreme disapproval of British policy and seemed convinced, though against his will, of collusion between Her Majesty's Government and Israel. Nevertheless, he promised to do his utmost to preserve security and peaceful conditions throughout the country. The first signs of discontent were the closing of the bazaar in Doha and the cutting of the oil pipeline 11 miles east of Umm Bab. Repair gangs, however, were quickly set to work on the pipeline. There is evidence that this sabotage was the work of a certain Hamad al Attiyah, and that he may have received instructions and demolition material during his recent visit to Egypt. At noon the Lebanese artisans under contract to the Darwish Company came out on strike. The only other disturbance which occurred on that day was caused by slogan shouting from schoolboy demonstrators.

20. At first light on November 2 H.M.S. *Loch Killisport*, which had been sent from Bahrain, arrived in position over the horizon off Umm Said. The Political Agent was later asked by the Ruler and Shaikh Ahmed that the frigate should only enter Umm Said or Doha harbour if matters got beyond their control. In the early part of the morning a demonstration headed by Hamad al Attiyah and his brother began in the suq but was promptly dispersed by Shaikh Ahmed. By midday the pipeline at Umm Bab was repaired. In the afternoon the two Al Attiyah were detained in their father's house 18 miles from Doha. At about the same time there was a rumour that artisans were planning to do damage to the Umm Said topping plant. A party of the Ruler's *fedawis* under British officers was despatched from Doha but found no sign of trouble. Also that afternoon, after the announcement of the fall of Gaza, a crowd of Palestinians formed in the centre of Doha but once more Shaikh Ahmed succeeded in clearing the streets. A small group, however, continued to hold up cars and to shout slogans. On that day the strike became general in Qatar Petroleum Company locations but remained sporadic in Qatar as a whole. During the night there was a rumour that Palestinians

were plotting to make the strike wholly effective throughout Qatar, Shaikh Ahmed sent a party of retainers to Dukhan to reinforce the police and to bolster up the workers. Despite the partial strike, essential services continued to operate without difficulty and in the afternoon Shaikh Ahmed returned from a short visit to Dukhan with the announcement that the strikers would return to work the next day. There is no doubt that the Ruler and Shaikh Ahmed showed commendable promptitude and conscientiousness in suppressing and forestalling disorders and the Political Agent expressed his gratitude to the former that evening and to Shaikh Ahmed on the following morning.

21. On November 6 there was talk of a further strike in protest against the landing of Anglo-French Forces in Egypt, but nothing materialised. The previous day 100 Palestinians had left Qatar for Damman and 50 Lebanese now expressed their wish to return home. The release of the Al Attiyah brothers on November 7 was perhaps an indication of some popular sympathy for their action and it was on the same day that the Ruler refused to agree to the export of Qatari crude oil to Bahrain. Moreover on November 9 the Political Agent felt obliged to speak to the Ruler on the subject of Qatari volunteers to Egypt and he then learned that about 200 volunteers had submitted their names. Despite these manifestations of sympathy towards the Egyptian cause, the appearance of the country since the reopening of the shops on November 4 has been tranquil and normal.

22. In the Trucial States, on November 1 the Political Agent discussed the implications of the crisis with the Rulers of Dubai and Sharjah. The Ruler of Dubai promised his unequivocal support. The Ruler of Sharjah was obviously much less happy but he also undertook to do his best to restrain Egyptian and Jordanian teachers and other likely agitators from criticising Her Majesty's Government. Meanwhile the Trucial Oman Scouts and the Dubai police were alerted. At this stage the Political Agent reported that he did not expect any adverse reaction in the Trucial States so long as British intervention in Egypt was swift and effective. Indeed, on November 3 it was reported by the Political Officer in Abu Dhabi that the Ruling Family there were pleased with Her Majesty's Government's action and Shaikh Zaid is said to have punctuated the BBC news bulletins with interjections of "Come on, Israel." Nevertheless the atmosphere in Dubai was distinctly uneasy and, as a result of minor incidents such as the theft of the Union Jack from the Political Agent's car, a guard was placed on the Agency building.

23. The following morning there were two reports of a strike in Dubai and the Political Agent urged the Ruler to assert his control over the citizens. At 11.30 p.m. that evening an attempt was made to burn the Assistant Political Adviser's garage but the fire was soon extinguished by guards and a helpful crowd. No incidents occurred during daylight on November 7 and, so far as Dubai was concerned, this was probably the result of the Ruler's injunctions to the merchants and leading notables and of increased patrols by the Dubai police. That evening, however, there was at Sharjah airport an attempt to burn down the International Aeradio Limited transmitting station. It is not yet known who was responsible for this action though the choice of objective suggests that it was the work of a comparatively sophisticated group. All the same there is now some hope that the political atmosphere and security situation of Sharjah and Dubai will shortly improve, for on November 8 I received permission to authorise the Political Agent to spend up to Rs.15,000 to deport Adeni, Pakistani and Saudi trouble-makers who have been lately exercising a sinister influence over the humbler inhabitants of those towns.

24. Public reaction in Muscat has been in interesting contrast to all the Shaikhdoms, except the more conservative and backward Shaikhdoms of the Trucial States. Although Israel is unpopular there, as in all Arab countries, Muscat is a country which remains comparatively untouched by Arab nationalist propaganda. Moreover, Muscatis are aware that Egypt has been actively plotting to overthrow the authority of their sovereign by creating an independent Imanate and many of them were not sorry to hear of our strong action on the Canal. Indeed, one might go so far as to say that in Muscat alone has there been a demonstration of positive approval of Her Majesty's Government's policy. This was shown during the course of the annual Earl Haig Poppy Day appeal initiated by Her Majesty's Consul-General on November 8, which achieved record contributions notwithstanding the somewhat priggish attempts of the Indian Consul to sabotage

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it. Haji Ali, a prominent notable of Muscat, travelled round putting down all suggestions that people should not subscribe, and reminding them of all that British soldiers, sailors and airmen had done in the past, proving the sincerity of his feelings, which are not usually outstandingly pro-British, by instructing his nephew to double their family's contribution from Rs.500 to Rs. 1,000. The Sultan was delighted that the appeal had been such a success and spoke to Her Majesty's Consul-General as follows: "I think you should know that the Consul of India sought my permission to start a fund for Egypt, and I told him that Muscat had no concern with the present dispute in the Middle East, that Egypt had not always been friendly to Muscat, and then I stopped." A similar reaction was registered amongst Sultanate supporters on the Batinah Coast, where irritation with Egypt had been intensified recently as a result of the radio broadcasts on Saut al Arab by the Imam's henchman, Salih bin Isa.

25. I am sending copies of this despatch to all Persian Gulf posts, to Beirut, Political Office, Middle East Forces, Cyprus, Baghdad and Amman.

I have, &c.

B. A. B. BURROWS.

SECRET

EA 1055/17

No. 15

UNITED KINGDOM POSITION IN THE PERSIAN GULF

Sir Roger Stevens to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received December 11)

(No. 140. Secret)

Tehran,

Sir, December 8, 1956.

In my despatch No. 131 of the 23rd of November, 1956, I set forth in general outline the steps which, in my submission, must be taken to restore our relations with Iran, and consolidate the Bagdad Pact. In paragraph 7 of that despatch I said that the Persian Gulf remains the Achilles heel of our relations with Iran; and I promised that in a later despatch I would go further into this problem. The suggestions which I now have the honour to offer are necessarily tentative in form. The problem of the Persian Gulf is a wider one than our relations with Iran; and Her Majesty's Political Resident at Bahrain must speak with greater authority than I can on many aspects of the question.

2. From a military point of view—leaving aside for the moment the question of oil—the position appears to be as follows. With the liquidation of our Indian Empire, the traditional reason for our presence in the Persian Gulf ceased to exist; and our positions there became stations on a road leading nowhere. This process has now been completed from the other side by the loss of our traditional footholds in Egypt, Palestine, Jordan and Iraq; the Persian Gulf road now starts nowhere either, and has become a sort of double-ended cul-de-sac. If it is to regain any function and meaning, it must seek vitality from some new source. And that, I submit, can only be the Bagdad Pact.

3. The reasons for our presence in the Persian Gulf, as seen from this end of it, can be roughly summarised under the following heads. On the asset side—oil; the naval base; sea communications. On the liability side, our treaties with the Sheikhs and the threat to sterling if the Sheikh of Kuwait decided to switch from sterling to dollars. And, lastly, in the 19th century conception, prestige.

4. Seen through Iranian eyes the picture is different. To them the British presence in the Gulf is a relic of the imperial and colonial past. We appear to be supporting weak, feudal rulers against a rising tide of popular discontent. And as the probable

outcome the Iranians see these little States falling like so many ripe plums into the open galabia of the Arab lap. Most of the Iranian Government's present actions are inspired by the rather tenuous hope of a few windfalls for themselves. They are looking for expanded oil revenues from the Continental Shelf and elsewhere, a dominant naval and mercantile position, and in general the prestige to be gained by asserting the Persian position in the "Persian" Gulf. Hence their absurd claim to Bahrain and their tiresome and aggressive seizure of Kuwait's small islands. Now that practically the whole Arab world has openly manifested its hostility to the British presence in the Middle East, the Iranians are moved to hope that we would prefer to see our place in the Gulf taken over by our Iranian friends rather than by our Arab enemies.

5. There is one other important element to be taken into consideration, namely America's views and ambitions. There have been many signs of late that the United States navy is aiming at building up for itself a predominant position in the Gulf; Sir Bernard Burrows' interesting despatch No. 118 of the 22nd of October on this subject bears out impressions we have obtained here. (There have for example been signs that the Americans are challenging what influence we have left with the Iranian navy.) The Gulf certainly plays an increasing part in United States thinking: protection of oil supplies, lines of communication for defence purposes. It would not surprise me to learn that other departments of the United States Government viewed our outposts in the Gulf with a somewhat jaundiced eye—partly because they have a colonial air, and partly because they may be thought to be crumbling. At any rate it must be taken as read that we shall get no assistance from the United States Government in maintaining or advancing our position in the Gulf on its present ill-defined basis. On the other hand we need not expect to see any American support for Iranian pretensions if these clash with the claims of Saudi Arabia. As to the other riparian Powers, Iraq has no very great interest, provided

she can preserve her present authority in the Shatt-el-Arab; and the attitude of Saudi Arabia is too well known to need elaboration here by me.

6. What are we really doing in the Persian Gulf? From the perspective of Tehran this question seems to answer itself under four summary heads. First, in the matter of oil, it is not clear to me that our political position in Kuwait and Qatar is essential to the maintenance of our commercial interests, nor am I sure how effective it is in the long run for ensuring that the Ruler of Kuwait does not try to spend his vast resources outside the sterling area. At any rate, recent events seem to have shown that our token military presence in the Gulf does not ensure the flow of oil, any more than a military occupation foothold in the Plate would guarantee our supply of beef. If, secondly, it is our obligations to the Sheikhs that keep us there, then I suggest that these require re-examination from two aspects, first an objective assessment of local loyalty to the British connection and, secondly, our ability to satisfy the demands of that loyalty. The answers to these two questions lie without my province. But the third consideration usually advanced to justify our presence in the Gulf, namely the maintenance of our sea communications, does directly concern this post as, in modern conditions, it is only valid if considered as an appendix to the Bagdad Pact: otherwise with whom (apart from the Sheikhs themselves) are we communicating? Finally, there is the question of face. And here, I submit, action is demanded. It is surely better to devise a constructive way out of this dead-end, even at the loss of a little prestige, rather than wait to be overwhelmed by events and thrust onto the inevitably disastrous defensive.

7. If these premises are accepted and it is agreed that they demand a policy of action, the next step is to devise a constructive solution. Here I am at some disadvantage, not knowing what thought has been given to this problem during recent months at Ministerial or any other level. Is any scheme for Federation still alive? This is the only solution that I have ever heard discussed which, for all its difficulties, seems to promise anything. A Federation could really mean something and could even justify in the eyes of the world the anachronism of these little feudal

States under alien protection. But if Federation is out, what is being considered in its place? It is, I know, held that the Sheikhsdoms which we protect should not be precipitated into world Power politics by our involving them in the military network of the Bagdad Pact. But I wonder whether this pseudo-neutralism is realistic in present times? (How neutral anyway can States be that harbour British naval bases?) Should we not rather try instead to reinforce our whole military, naval and air position in the Gulf Sheikhsdoms, extending them where possible, e.g., Kuwait, as our contribution to the underpinning of the Bagdad Pact and as a form of infrastructure? If acceptable, this should consolidate the political position too and thus tend to maintain the *status quo*. If the United States joined the Pact, it might be necessary to make the operation an Anglo-American one. While this would clearly have many disadvantages, it would at least go far to resolve the problem of Anglo-American rivalry in the Gulf, and would also help to avert an assault on our position from the south-west—or from below. Formal commitment of the Sheikhs and their subjects could, if necessary, be avoided or side-stepped. This proposal may have its snags. But what is the alternative to it? If we sit tight, do nothing and hope for the best, a situation will eventually arise in which our position will become practically untenable and our enforced departure will wither our prestige. We must either go forward or we shall be forced to quit. And forward, as seen from here, means forward into a stronger, wider and more vital conception of the Bagdad Pact. Development along these lines could produce a concurrent solution of rival claims to the Gulf islands (perhaps by agreed reference to The Hague Court), territorial waters and mineral rights in the Continental Shelf.

8. If I have in this despatch embarked on considerations somewhat wider than my own sphere, my excuse must be that their solution is essential to the maintenance of our position in the country in which I have the honour to represent Her Majesty's Government. Unless we develop some new philosophy in the Gulf, the Iranians, with all their claims and ambitions and follies, will seize the initiative and we shall be involved in a progressively deteriorating round of acrimonious exchanges, first verbal, then maybe physical. I hope therefore that I may soon receive your

reactions to the thoughts set out above and some information about Her Majesty's Government's policy in these matters. I might then be able to formulate more precise recommendations for dealing with the Iranian aspects of the problem.

9. I am copying this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Ankara, Bahrain, Bagdad, Karachi, Washington and the Political Office with the Middle East Forces.

I have, &c.

R. STEVENS.

EA 1642/23

No. 16

JURISDICTION IN THE PERSIAN GULF

Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Sir Bernard Burrows (Bahrain)

(No. 163. Confidential)
Sir,

Foreign Office,
December 12, 1956.

I refer to your Excellency's despatch No. 107 (16402/38/56) of the 17th of September about Her Majesty's Government's future legislative and judicial policy in the Persian Gulf.

2. I agree with your view that the flow of new Queen's Regulations must continue to be restricted. However, it will be necessary to make some exceptions in order to replace certain of the more anachronistic Indian legislation with simpler and more up-to-date codified laws. Apart from the incongruity of applying laws, which in form are those of the Indian empire, more than nine years after Indian independence, much of this legislation is extremely difficult to apply, and requires considerable adaptation before it can be made appropriate to circumstances in the Persian Gulf. It will, however, be necessary to ensure that the replacing regulations are in fact more easily comprehensible and less cumbersome than the old Indian law. It may be possible, for example, in some circumstances merely to re-enact the substance of the old Indian legislation, removing all traces of Indian origin; in other circumstances, it would obviously be desirable to base the replacing regulation on a more modern colonial precedent. I do not think it is possible to establish any general rule on this point.

3. Parallel legislation can, I think, best be encouraged by consultation with the local government at the drafting stage. The unco-operative attitude of the Kuwaiti authorities when faced with a complex *fait accompli* (e.g., the Traffic Regulations) can probably best be averted in future if the draft is discussed while it is still fluid, as you suggest in paragraph 3 of your despatch under reference. The long delay in obtaining Dr. Sanhuri's recommendations about the Bahrain Penal Code, makes it clear that in future some other Muslim jurist will have to be consulted as *ad hoc* adviser on major pieces of legislation. The chances of parallel legislation being accepted will presumably be increased by the knowledge of such a jurist's participation. It will be necessary at the time to consider whether any special publicity for his work is justified in any particular case. Clearly Mr. Hejazi's advice will often be available on similar points, and it is important that he should be consulted, but the more independent status of an outside Muslim jurist will weigh much more heavily with the public, as evidence that the collaboration is an attempt to take account of local Muslim opinion and tradition.

4. I continue to regard the improvement of the standard of the judges in the Ruler's Courts as of considerable importance, and this should be pressed equally with the demand for codified legislation. Perhaps previously attention has been concentrated too exclusively on the laws themselves and not sufficiently on the fact that no law is good enough to stand up to being administered by a bad judge. The provision of competent judges is in itself likely to provide an effective pressure group for a codified law. The Ruler of Bahrain must certainly be pressed to honour his undertaking to provide a trained judge for each court to sit with the local judges. An alternative to this, which might prove less objectionable to the Rulers, is your Excellency's suggestion, made in relation to Qatar, of appointing a trained clerk for the local courts. Such an official might well be able to exercise a measurable influence over the judges from below by reason of his greater local experience, in much the same way as a magistrate's clerk in England. Such restraint would probably be less offensive to the pride of the Shaikhly judge than the sudden imposition of a colleague who acted as an equal. I leave it to your discretion to press one or both of these proposals on the Rulers concerned but should be glad to have soon your report on the prospects of success in the different territories.

5. In paragraph 6 of your despatch your Excellency agreed that the Orders in Council should be simplified and made more flexible. This would involve re-enacting much of the content of the orders in the form of Queen's Regulation,

while cutting out any dead wood. Such regulations could then be amended without the cumbersome process of submitting the amendment to Parliament as is necessary in the case of amendments to orders. I intend to embark on this rather formidable task when the orders are next revised, but it must be remembered, that by reason of the terms of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act, 1890, there is a limit to this process of simplification.

6. I agree that the present is certainly not the moment for the visit of a commission of legal experts as was suggested in paragraph 9 of Mr. Riches' letter No. 1642/10 of the 30th of May. Nevertheless I should be very reluctant to abandon the scheme entirely or even to postpone it for very long once settled conditions have been restored in the Middle East, because I am advised that profit would be obtained in the long run from receiving the opinion of independent experts on many of the legal problems which arise in the Persian Gulf. For example, the pace of legal development has been much faster in Muslim colonial territories than is generally realised, and it is interesting to note that Muslim judges and legislators have made considerable progress in reforming their own law by the simple process of selecting from the various schools of Islamic law (including even some which have hitherto been regarded as schismatic or heretical) the particular rule of practice which best meets modern conditions. In this way Islamic law can be developed from within itself. The idea is perhaps one which might assist in solving the problem of persuading the local Gulf Rulers to accept some codified law. The visit of a team including at least one member well acquainted with Islamic law, should produce valuable suggestions concerning the exercise of Her Majesty's jurisdiction, and also concerning the measures which might be taken to encourage and assist the Rulers to reform and develop their own legal systems.

7. The problems of jurisdiction discussed in paragraphs 10 and 11 of your despatch have been dealt with in a separate despatch.

8. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Political Agents at Bahrain, Kuwait, Doha and Dubai and to Her Majesty's Consulate-General at Muscat.

I am, &c.

SELWYN LLOYD.

CHAPTER II.—SAUDI ARABIA

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

P 10133/1G

No. 17

SAUDI ARABIA

(No. 3. Intel)

January 12, 1956.

The circumstances in which the arbitration of the Buraimi dispute broke down were fully explained in the Prime Minister's statement to the House of Commons on October 26. Briefly they were that, so far from honouring their agreement with Her Majesty's Government to refrain from any action which might prejudice a just and fair arbitration, the Saudis indulged in bribery, intimidation and gun-running on a scale which would be regarded as considerable anywhere in the world, but which in an area of a few thousand inhabitants and very low living standards, was overwhelming. Several sackfuls of messages exchanged between the Commander of the Saudi Police Group in Buraimi and the authorities in Saudi Arabia were seized in Buraimi in plain language form. These constitute complete and irrefutable proof of Saudi guilt. Slave-trading is another crime which the Saudis are shown by these messages to have committed.

2. These facts, together with the Saudi conduct towards the Tribunal itself, show that the Saudis had no intention of being bound by those conditions of arbitration which they found inconvenient. It is also clear that Saudi bribery has so distorted the traditional loyalty of the inhabitants that no judicial solution of this problem is now possible. Negotiations have been tried intermittently for thirty years with the Saudis, but they have never been willing to make the smallest compromise. The unilateral declaration of a frontier line was therefore the only remaining possibility.

3. In Central Oman, south and south-east of Buraimi, the Saudis tried to detach from the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman (which is an independent State and not under British protection) an important area in which a religious dignitary, the Imam, exercised a measure of internal autonomy. They sent the Imam money, arms and ammunition and persuaded him to claim independent sovereignty. The Sultan, however, recently reasserted his authority in the area and the Imam fled. His supporters fired one shot.

4. Thus, the Saudi's policy of trying to swallow up the other Arab States in South-Eastern Arabia has received a serious check. If oil is found in this area one half of the revenue from it will go to the Iraq Petroleum Company (a British-managed international consortium of British, American, French and Dutch interests) and the other half will go to the Arab Rulers concerned. As has happened in the States of Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain, which are under British protection, a high proportion of the money would be devoted to the betterment of the people. It would not go, as is the case in Saudi Arabia, into the pockets of rapacious and dissolute rulers or be devoted to corruption in other Arab States.

5. For Saudi bribery is by no means confined to the Arabian peninsula. King Saud is surrounded by irresponsible and self-seeking counsellors whose policy, apart from lining their own pockets, is bitterly anti-Western. These men have launched Saudi Arabia into a policy of widespread corruption of the Arab world. Politicians, journalists, officials and leading figures in every Arab country are on the Saudi pay-roll and their obligation to their pay-masters is to work against the Baghdad Pact and co-operation with the West. This is common knowledge all over the Middle East and it constitutes a serious obstacle to the development of Western policy. Opposition to co-operation with the West and to the Baghdad Pact is, of course, the Communists' policy also. Although there do not seem to be any conscious links between Saudi and Communist agents, they are pursuing the same policies.

6. It is important that world opinion should not be taken in by facile "anti-imperialist" propaganda put out by Saudi Arabia. The Saudis' intended victims are the small Arab Rulers of the Arabian peninsula, whose territory and possible oil

resources they wish to appropriate; and the inhabitants of the other Arab States, who are being systematically corrupted and shut out from fruitful co-operation with their neighbours.

7. It is important that the true facts about Saudi Arabia should be widely known, particularly as the Saudis may appeal to the United Nations on the Buraimi case. You may use all the above in conversation with responsible officials for this purpose.

ESO 1011/1

No. 18

SAUDI ARABIA: ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 1955

Mr. Phillips to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received February 3)

(No. 11. Confidential)
Sir,Jedda,
January 22, 1956.

In the absence of the Ambassador I have the honour of sending you the annual report on Saudi Arabia. At the end of this despatch will be found a chronology of the principal events of 1955.

2. If 1954 was a formative year for the new Saudi Arabia, 1955 may be regarded as the first year of its deplorable maturity. Looking back on it I am struck most by the appalling growth of Saudi vanity and arrogance. By bribing unscrupulously, and by playing on Washington's fear of Communism and concern for American interests in this country, the Saudi rulers have in the past year achieved a position in the Middle East which they conceitedly regard as that of a major Power. Only an increasingly firm policy towards them has enabled Her Majesty's Government to cancel some of the effects of their gold and blackmail. Inevitably this policy has strained traditional Anglo-Saudi friendship to breaking point. And in consequence, given the different focus of United Kingdom and United States interests in Saudi Arabia, it has not been an easy year for Anglo-American relations here either.

3. The main cause of the serious deterioration in Anglo-Saudi relations was the Buraimi dispute, which became more acute in 1955 than at any time in its twenty-years' history. It was evident to Her Majesty's Government early in the year that Buraimi was being used as a centre for subversive activity by the Saudi Government through their police group set up there under the arbitration agreement of 1954. The full extent of this activity became clear at a meeting of the arbitration tribunal in Geneva in September. It was revealed that not only were the Saudi Government paying enormous bribes to tribal sheikhs in and around the disputed areas to sign away their allegiance to Abu Dhabi and Muscat, but under Saudi influence the integrity of the tribunal itself could no longer be regarded as a fact. As a result the British member, Sir Reader Bullard, resigned, and was followed shortly after by the Belgian president and one of the two other neutral members—the Cuban.

4. In the opinion of Her Majesty's Government a solution by arbitration was no longer possible: even apart from the faults in the tribunal it was clear that Saudi activity in the disputed areas had destroyed the very basis of an impartial arbitration. On the 26th of October, therefore, Her Majesty's Government acting for the Rulers of Abu Dhabi and Muscat expelled the Saudi police contingent and the more blatant quislings from Buraimi and restored the situation there, and in the remaining disputed areas, to what it had been before the Saudi agent Turki bin Ataishan invaded the oasis in August 1952. At the same time Her Majesty's Government unilaterally declared a frontier between Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi (based on the so-called Riyadh Line of 1935) which they considered to be a just and reasonable division of the disputed areas.

5. The spontaneous reaction of the ordinary people of Saudi Arabia was surprisingly mild. But the reaction in the Government and among the tribes was fierce, and King Saud, with the very real question of his pride involved, has continued to encourage and respond to this tribal emotion. As the year ended, clamour for a holy war against the British was still being fomented by the Government-controlled press and radio. For the moment however the King is temporising by refusing to receive Her Majesty's Ambassador-designate (having earlier recalled his own from London) and by leaving open the question of whether Saudi Arabia will raise a complaint against the United Kingdom in the Security Council. It is a difficult balance for him to maintain (as the Americans never cease to remind us) and if normal Anglo-Saudi relations are to be resumed there will have to be much patient negotiation in the first part of 1956 to find a way out of the present *impasse* which will both save the King's face and assure our position in the Persian Gulf.

6. It is perhaps opportune to the Saudi purpose of trying to force Her Majesty's Government to a settlement of the Buraimi dispute that Russian designs on the Middle East in 1955 did not altogether neglect Saudi Arabia. After a meeting in Tehran in August between King Saud and the Soviet Ambassador (at the repeated request of the latter) there were vague reports and contradictions towards the end of the year of further contacts between the two Governments. But if in fact 1955 has seen no positive developments in all this, it is clear that the official Saudi attitude to Communism is becoming more and more ambivalent. The King himself probably remains genuinely opposed to dealings with Russia. But such feelings are tending to give way to the ideas of neutralism propagated at the Bandung Conference, and in any case are being effectively undermined by the King's advisers with the example of Egyptian and Syrian dealings with Communist States before them. For the advisers, though probably quite aware of the dangers involved, are at the same time conceitedly sure of their ability to modify the effects of giving Russia some sort of foothold in Saudi Arabia. The obvious blackmail value of flirting with the Communists is therefore increasing in this country as elsewhere in the Middle East.

7. The blackmail is naturally directed here more at the Americans than ourselves because it is they who have more to lose—in their investments in the oil company and in the air base at Dhahran; and more to give—in the way of arms and political support over Buraimi and all that that question stands for to the Saudi ruling family. If in this past year the latter have to some extent succeeded in the role of blackmailer it is due not so much to their acumen as to the difference between British and American estimates of this country. It may I think be said to be a difference of focus. Her Majesty's Government are intent on strengthening those States in the Middle East already strongest against the Communist threat and *ipso facto* containing those like Saudi Arabia who are opposed to such a policy. The United States less imaginatively view Saudi Arabia in isolation and regard it as a State whose rulers will be forced by the intransigence of British policy towards them to turn to Communist Governments for support. So, despite the fallacy of this argument where an absolute régime of the Saudi kind is concerned, American support continues to be given to the régime blindly and almost fearfully on issues in which it is in conflict with the United Kingdom.

8. These issues are not confined to frontier disputes around the Arabian Peninsula. Saudi Arabia's foreign policy, stemming from fear of the Hashemites, territorial ambitions and a woolly conception of pan-Islam, has descended into a subversive activity in the Middle East so widespread and irresponsible that it has in the past year become for Her Majesty's Government one of the chief problems in the area. Money, if not the root, is the nourishment of this evil; and it is money, rather than any other benefit that the alliance might confer, that has brought the Republics of Egypt and Syria to harness themselves with such a reactionary monarchy as Saudi Arabia. The abortive tripartite agreement originally mooted to counter the Bagdad Pact gave way later in the year to a more flexible group of bilateral pacts between the three countries; and that between Saudi Arabia and Syria was followed by a Saudi loan of \$10 million to the latter. Saudi money, too, had by the end of the year seriously weakened the British position in Jordan and given an opening to Communist elements there.

9. There seems little doubt that such a policy of aggrandisement, blind to the best interests of Saudi Arabia herself in the long run, stems largely from the embittered nationalism of the émigré advisers who surround the King: men like Yusuf Yasin, Jamal Hussein, Khalid abu Walid and Bashir Saadawi. Having failed in a bid for power in the countries of their upbringing they transferred their allegiances elsewhere, where their knowledge of Western diplomacy was an asset. It was unfortunate that it should be to the one Middle Eastern State that has not known any form of Western domination. As a consequence their energies have not latterly been directed to a specifically patriotic goal, but spill over instead in a vague will to power, a self-assertiveness which finds its expression in any and every anti-Western cause, from violent opposition to the Bagdad Pact to discreet encouragement of Mau Mau terrorist activity.

10. Inevitably such vast expenditure abroad can only be made at the cost of internal development, and in the past year the Government have achieved scarcely anything that can be regarded as positively beneficial to the people. The waste of the country's yearly oil revenue, now around the £100 million mark, is stupefying.

The road between Jedda and Medina has been almost completed. A grandiose five-year health plan was published in March, though so far all that has matured has been a number of clinics (still un-equipped) in various small towns. A few cast-off royal palaces have been made over for use as schools. The precincts of the Holy Places in Mecca and Medina are being improved at enormous cost. Some smaller mosques have been repaired or built, and a number of one-room Koranic "schools" endowed by the King with the usual sycophantic blare of publicity. And there social progress virtually ends.

11. While these paltry sums are spent on the betterment of the people millions are drained away by the royal family's craze for palaces and the King's plan to rebuild Riyadh his capital, by the sottish behaviour of the princes and their friends, by (admittedly more essential) the large subventions required to retain the loyalty of the tribes as well as political subversion abroad, and by the growing commitment of the armed forces. It is unlikely that this rate of unproductive spending will decrease; indeed, human greed being what it is, it is improbable that it could. Will this momentum of spending, increasing enormously, eventually spin the régime off its feet? Not necessarily, I think. So assured are the oil supplies that the process of mortgaging the oil revenues, which has already been accomplished to the extent of one year's income, could continue almost indefinitely. But here too the Government are being characteristically short-sighted, for increasing social tensions might ultimately make an investment in Saudi Arabia unattractive for even the most speculative of New York bankers.

12. By the middle of 1955 there could be noted a slightly louder murmur of discontent inside the country, more slogans daubed on the palace walls, subversive pamphlets and a tentative revolutionary movement in the army (quickly suppressed without mercy). There was a corresponding attempt to increase the efficiency of the Government's security services. Likely trouble-makers from other Arab States were deported; a small tribal rising in the south was severely quelled; and the leaders of dissident movements in Damman and Medina received summary and brutal punishment. Such social tensions and their symptoms are obviously on the increase, but the remedy—better Government—is as far from being applied now as it was a year ago. The policy of the régime remains unchanged and unenlightened. It attempts no more than is necessary to maintain the *status quo* and ensure the dominance of the ruling clique.

13. Yet within the clique itself there is an element of instability. It may be that the original co-operation which the King enjoyed with his brothers at the start of his reign is wearing thin. It is constantly rumoured that Crown Prince (and Foreign Minister) Faisal is to take his brother Saud's place and that a meeting to forward this plan was called by Mohammed, the third brother, in Cairo in the autumn. There have been some indications that Faisal is becoming impatient with Saud's extravagance and I am not yet prepared to discount all ideas that Saud may be quietly, or even bloodily, removed from the throne. On the other hand I do not believe that such a change would necessarily be an improvement. Faisal is not so gullible as his brother, but this very quality might impel him to pursue with more careful thought (and therefore success) the anti-British policies which Saud tends to follow largely by emotion. It may even be that Saud's embarrassed inactivity over Buraimi, if it continues, will give Faisal a convenient weapon to gain his ambitions. But outwardly there is no sign of this.

14. The country's economy, though basically sound, continued to be run as haphazardly as ever. The Arabian-American Oil Company were unable to come to a signed agreement with the Government over back-payment claims, but paid them \$70 million in anticipatory settlement. There were also negotiations between the company and the Government and an American combine to put to use the surplus natural gas at present being flared to waste in the oilfields. Yet despite higher oil revenues the Government's finances remained as hard-pressed as ever. The Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency finally lost what little independence it had and is now a mere tool of the Minister of Finance. Towards the end of the year the amount of foreign exchange being released to merchants was quite inadequate for commercial needs; consequently high free-market rates developed and caused some internal devaluation of the riyal. In the commercial field the year was notable for the marked attention being paid to the Saudi market by Eastern European countries, notably over the supply of building materials. A Polish combine was said to have won the contract for the survey prior to the reconstruction of the old Hejaz Railway.

15. In general British trade here suffered as a result of the Buraimi affair. By the end of the year Saudi official bitterness over this remained unabated, and the possibility of a general boycott of British trade with this country cannot be discounted. Nor can the extreme step of severance of diplomatic relations by the Saudi Government be ruled out; and with that might begin a series of nuisance raids by Saudi tribesmen on Buraimi and other British-protected territory in the peninsula. Much will depend on the outcome of the Saudi diplomatic activity in Washington and at the United Nations which the new year will see. Yet notwithstanding all these hazards there seems little doubt that Her Majesty's Government's policy of firmness with the Saudi rulers has paid well and may even be thought to have been overdue. In Buraimi, as also in Muscat and Oman and the Aden Protectorate, the clear decisions made in 1955 have been a bold step in these frontier disputes which have now dragged on for twenty years. So long as the present Saudi Government are in power there is little chance that they will be anything but opposed to the maintenance of British influence in the Arabian Peninsula or in the Middle East as a whole. To counter this I suggest that our policy must be to immunise as far as is possible those other Arab countries which are open to Saudi contagion, to wait for the régime here to accomplish its own destruction or reform, and to ensure as best we may (and with as much American co-operation as we can get by urgent re-education of American official thinking on Saudi Arabia) that what follows in its place is neither anarchy nor "the mixture as before."

I have, &c.

H. PHILLIPS.

Enclosure

Calendar of Events for 1955

January

- 16 Ninth Session of Cultural Committee of Arab League opened at Jedda by Prince Fahd, Saudi Minister of Education.
- 22 Buraimi Arbitration Tribunal met at Nice and decided that both parties to the frontier dispute should have equal facilities of access to the Buraimi Zone.

February

- 8 A royal decree was issued providing for the construction of a road from Jedda to Damman.
- The Ministry of Finance was authorised to mint 50 million silver riyals to back the paper currency known as "pilgrim receipts."
- 12 King Saud declared that he was opposed to all military alliances between Arabs and foreign Powers.
- 26 A military academy was founded at Riyadh.

March

- 5 Khalid al Azm, Syrian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Major Salah Salem, Egyptian Minister of National Guidance, arrived in Riyadh for talks with King Saud and Prince Faisal. The following day, in conjunction with Syria and Egypt, Saudi Arabia announced a proposed agreement to unify their military commands and consolidate economic co-operation between the three countries.
- 10 Saudi Arabia and Jordan agree to demarcate their common frontier.

April

- 16 Prince Talal resigned from the Ministry of Communications which was then merged with the Ministry of Finance.
- 20 It was announced that the Onassis tanker dispute between the Saudi Arabian Government and the Arabian-American Oil Company would be submitted to international arbitration on June 15.
- 23 Saudi nationals were forbidden by royal decree to send their children abroad for elementary and secondary education.

SECRET

May

- 1 Circulation of pamphlets criticising the régime. Internal unrest in the country came to a head with the arrest of the Chief of the Labour Office in the Eastern Province.
- 13 Saudi Arabia's offer of mediation in the dispute between Pakistan and Afghanistan was accepted.
- 19 The Ma'azam (Oman) incident in which Saudi Arabian subjects were claimed to have been killed.

June

- 7 King Saud assured Egypt of full support in the event of an Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip.
- 21 King Saud contributed £Syr.2 million towards financing a technical study of the repairs necessary to resuscitate the old Hejaz Railway.
- 28 Saudi Arabia, Syria and Jordan agreed to set up an office in Damascus to supervise the affairs of repairing the railway.
- 29 The failure of Saudi Arabia's mediation in the Pakistan-Afghanistan dispute is announced.

July

- 1 Continuing the security measures taken earlier this year the Saudi Government this month embarked on a series of deportations involving Lebanese, Palestinians and Syrians. Many of those concerned were connected to a greater or lesser degree with the Parti Populaire Syrienne.
- 8 A fire at Hamasa in Buraimi Oasis caused great hardship. Saudi intransigence prevented the distribution of British relief supplies.

August

- 4 Her Majesty's Government inform the Saudi Arabian Government of what they consider to be the frontiers between Saudi Arabia on the one hand and Aden Protectorate, Muscat and Oman on the other.
- 9 King Saud arrived in Teheran for a week's State visit. In the course of this he received the Russian Ambassador to Iran.
- 14 Abdullah bal Khair, the King's Chief Secretary, was appointed Director of Information.
- 20 News of trouble in the Southern Saudi province of Asir. A dissident tribe took up a defensive position in the mountains and it was only two or three months later that they were finally brought to heel.

September

- 5 King Hussein of Jordan arrived in Saudi Arabia for a three-day visit.
- 13 Queen Zein of Jordan paid a secret visit to Saudi Arabia.
- 16 The resignation of Sir Reader Bullard from the Buraimi Arbitration Tribunal and the consequent breakdown of the proceedings.
- 19 An ARAMCO party is discovered to have set up a camp in the Aden Protectorate. They withdrew shortly afterwards.
- 23 The President of the Buraimi Arbitration Tribunal also resigns.

October

- 26 Reoccupation of the Buraimi Oasis and certain of the other disputed areas. At the same time Her Majesty's Government informed the Saudi Government that they would regard the "Amended (1937) Riyadh Line" as the frontier between Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia.
- 27 A military pact between Egypt and Saudi Arabia was signed in Cairo. The pact provides for the establishment of a joint military command.

SECRET

November

- 8 Prince Sultan bin Abdul Aziz becomes Minister of Communications. His place at the Ministry of Agriculture was taken by Abdul Aziz bin Ahmed as Sidayri; three weeks later Sidayri died.
- 9 An economic agreement between Syria and Saudi Arabia is signed at Jedda. Syria also obtained a loan of \$10 million.
- 26 King Saud left Dhahran by air for a three week State visit to India.

December

- 24 King Saud opens the Abdul Aziz Military College in Riyadh. The ceremony was attended by General Abdul Hakim Amir, the newly-appointed Commander-in-Chief of the joint Saudi Arabian-Egyptian armed forces.

ES 1051/32

No. 19

CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR ON APRIL 23, 1956

Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Sir Roger Makins (Washington)

(No. 342. Confidential)
Sir,

Foreign Office,
April 23, 1956.

I asked the United States Ambassador to call to see me to-day. I told him that I wanted to talk about Saudi Arabia. Her Majesty's Government had decided to send a mission led by Mr. Dodds-Parker to discuss Anglo-Saudi questions and had this morning received a message back from King Saud indicating that he would receive the mission on April 26. The King's reply was not bad, though it contained a reference to "the achievement of a solution of current dispute" which might be a reference to Buraimi. At the same time as the news of the King's acceptance I had received the news that Saudi Arabia and Egypt had signed a pact with the Yemen. The Egyptian Government had welcomed this pact as a blow to Britain and as part of a plan to drive Britain from the Arabian peninsula. It was true that the Saudis had not said anything anti-British in their pronouncement about the pact.

2. With the news of the conclusion of the pact came a report from Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Jedda that Saudi Arabia had given a loan of 10 million dollars to the Yemen. On the same day news reached London that the Yemenis were attacking territories in the Aden Protectorate. In conversation with Bulganin and Khrushchev on Saturday they had admitted that they were selling arms to the Yemen in order to counter the Bagdad Pact and to tie down as many British troops as possible in the vicinity of Aden. We therefore had the situation in which Russian arms were being supplied to the Yemen, and paid for by a loan made to the Yemen by Saudi Arabia from money received from the United States oil companies, and all this having the effect of embarrassing Britain in the Middle East. I foresaw that my colleagues would have serious doubts whether it was right in these circumstances that our emissary should go to Saudi Arabia, apparently cap in hand, and they would probably favour calling off the mission. I asked whether the United States Government could find out what the Saudis were doing and whether this report of the loan was true.

3. In reply the Ambassador said that the United States Government could not, of course, stop American money going to Saudi Arabia so long as United States companies worked the oil there. He had received a similar report about the Saudi loan to the Yemen, but in spite of this he thought that the sooner our emissary could get to Saudi Arabia the better. When he was there he could speak straight to the King and the Saudi Government and tell them this sort of behaviour must stop. He would receive the full support of the United States Government in doing so and in preventing attacks on Aden while he was there. He would not be going cap in hand, but with the full support of both Governments. The interests of the United Kingdom and the United States in the area were identical and Mr. Aldrich thought it was quite out of the question that the Saudi Government should receive any support from the United States Government for any policy favouring the Russians, as that would immediately have an adverse effect on their oil interests. I said our present difficulty was that whenever we made a move towards the Saudis they seemed to make a move against us. We were just about to go to talk to them and they came out with the conclusion of the Treaty and the announcement of the loan. Mr. Barbour, who accompanied the Ambassador, said that according to United States reports the Saudis had said that the Treaty was not in any way anti-British. It provided that an attack upon any of the parties should be regarded as an attack upon one of them, but it had no other clauses open or secret.

4. The Ambassador agreed that it was not in King Saud's interests to have Russian arms in the Yemen. He thought it would be suicidal for the King to encourage that. He thought, however, that the quantity of arms which the Yemen might receive would be insignificant compared with those which the Russians were supplying to Egypt. Mr. Barbour said that he had no recollection that the United

States Government had ever warned King Saud about the dangers of Russian arms in the Yemen, but he pointed out that the internal situation there was difficult and might be quoted as sufficient to justify the supply of arms.

5. I said that the United States Government agreed with us that our negotiations with the Saudis should be taken slowly. I very much feared that the arrival of a Minister in Saudi Arabia at this time might be strongly criticised in this country. The Saudis too might think that they had got Britain on the run in Aden and in Bahrain and might be pleased to negotiate with us at this time when we appeared to be in a position of weakness. The Ambassador considered that the demonstration of British and American co-operation in this affair—which he thought should be an open one—would be a show of strength not of weakness, while to call off the mission now after it had been accepted by the Saudis would show sensitivity to the Saudi-Egyptian-Yemeni Pact, and present it as a British diplomatic defeat.

6. Finally the Ambassador expressed understanding of our difficulties and undertook to send a telegram to the United States State Department expressing my concern at the developments of the past few days, and at the effect which I feared they might have on our plans for sending Mr. Dodds-Parker to Saudi-Arabia.

7. I took the occasion to thank Mr. Aldrich for the speech which he had made at Leicester, and added appreciation of what the United States Government had done to associate itself with the Bagdad Pact.

8. I referred also to the Russian visit. Mr. Barbour said that he had been kept well informed of the progress of our talks with Bulganin and Khrushchev, but he asked about a conversation I had had about Germany. I told him that in the course of a journey by car on April 21 the Russians had spoken at great length about German atrocities during the war and had asked why we wanted to arm Germany. I had replied that we could not expect to keep Germany down for ever. The problem was how to handle her, and it seemed to me that the Russian method of keeping her both divided and unarmed would cause an explosion sooner or later. My own personal view was that Germany should not be allowed complete freedom in rearmament, but I thought that control should be reached through a general disarmament agreement. At this Bulganin had prophesied that in two years the Germans would turn to the East and cut their ties with the West. Dr. Adenauer could only have a few more years to live and the Russians were already receiving many approaches from people in West Germany. When I asked him how he would keep Germany unarmed, he had merely replied that together we could do it.

9. Referring to our discussions with the Russians on the Middle East, I told the Ambassador that it seemed to me that the Bagdad Pact had got under their skin. They felt ringed round by it and by the bases which we and the United States Government maintained abroad. I had told them quite frankly that I did not think they wanted war, but that we believed they intended to subvert countries of the Middle East through the Persian Tudeh party and similar groups. We could not have our oil jeopardised and the Bagdad Pact was designed to protect Middle East countries from this form of attack.

10. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Bonn and Jedda and to the Political Resident at Bahrain.

I am, &c.

SELWYN LLOYD.

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ES 1051/36

No. 20

LETTER FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO KING SAUD

Dated April 24, 1956

Your Majesty,

When two old friends have drifted apart, the first steps towards the renewal of friendship are never easy. For this reason I think it is my duty to inaugurate the meetings that we have arranged by writing to Your Majesty personally.

First I would assure you of the regret I have felt at seeing our relations deteriorate after so many years of friendly partnership first under your illustrious father and latterly under yourself. I therefore rejoice at the opportunity that these talks will bring of renewing that old cordiality.

Your Majesty will understand that neither we nor any other people worthy of respect can be untrue to those who rely upon us to protect their interests. I know well that Your Majesty is actuated by very similar considerations. I therefore foresee that the negotiations which will take place will centre round a definition of Saudi interests on the one hand and those of Her Majesty's Government and our friends on the other. May patient negotiation reconcile them!

The negotiations may well be difficult in any case, but they will fail if suspicion of each other's motives continues. Her Majesty's Government are genuinely seeking to find a settlement that will be compatible with their own responsibilities and the interests of their friends. I beg Your Majesty that you will not listen to those who may tell you otherwise. For my part I accept the assurances that you gave to Her Majesty's Ambassador in Cairo that it was not your intention to seek to exclude the British from the Arabian Peninsula and I know that you will understand the importance of ensuring that Your Majesty's servants in distant parts do nothing which is contrary to that assurance.

In this spirit I am confident that the settlement that we both desire can be reached. I am therefore sending the Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign Office to speak for me. Mr. Dodds-Parker was associated with me when I was at the Foreign Office and he knows the Arab countries well. I am confident that he will faithfully represent to Your Majesty what is in our hearts.

I take this opportunity of assuring Your Majesty of my highest consideration.

ANTHONY EDEN.

April 24, 1956.

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ES 1051/52

No. 21

LETTER FROM KING SAUD TO THE PRIME MINISTER

Dated April 30, 1956

(Translation)

From Saud ibn Abdul Aziz Al Saud, King of Saudi Arabia, to His Excellency the Right Honourable Sir Anthony Eden, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain.

Greetings.

We have received your letter of April 24, 1956, which was conveyed to us by Mr. Dodds-Parker, Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs. We have acknowledged the feelings you have expressed about the state of the relations between our two countries. We would like to assure you that we have no doubt whatsoever that it is in the interest of our two countries that efforts should be made to remove every obstacle which stands in the way of these relations and prevents them progressing towards a consolidation of our interests on the basis of a real understanding of them. Nothing is more welcome to me than to see the restoration of that traditional friendship which has for so long prevailed in the relations between our two Kingdoms. Your Excellency no doubt remembers that my country has always, in critical times, proved its adherence to that friendship.

For reasons of which you are well aware, these relations have unfortunately lately deteriorated. My Government, for their part, spared no effort sincerely to act for the removal of these reasons and for the restoration of the former relations of our countries.

Consequently we were glad that you delegated Mr. Dodds-Parker who, together with his Excellency Her Majesty's Ambassador to our court, was received with all hospitality in our country. He had discussions with me, as well as with my Prime Minister, my brother Feisal, and with responsible officials of my Government; these discussions were completely frank and showed a determination to arrive at positive results. We strongly feel that Mr. Dodds-Parker has sensed our real motives and true intentions. He will represent to your Excellency our readiness for goodwill which he has discerned.

The firm desire which I have for the removal of all obstacles in the way of restoring our relations upon a sound foundation compels me to state frankly that this removal depends on your Government. The success of our endeavours also depends on what efforts the British Government make to reach this end.

Your Excellency undoubtedly realises the importance which the Government and people of this country attach to a just settlement of the Buraimi case and of the frontiers in dispute. Such a settlement would restore conditions to what they were and would restore faith and confidence to the hearts of millions of the inhabitants of this country who are constantly seized with anxiety because their pride has been wounded and because part of their historical inheritance in traditional national sovereignty has been carved away. We feel that this solution alone would open a new era in the relations between our two countries and would pave the way for serving their common interests. It would furthermore be an effective contribution to the consolidation of peace in this area, a matter to which we devote all our energy and attention. We believe that you are of our opinion that time is a basic element in achieving this belated end. Our mutual interests call for a speedy and equitable settlement.

In this connexion, I would like to reaffirm to your Excellency my former statement to his Excellency Her Majesty's Ambassador in Cairo to the effect that my Government has abided and still abides by its undertakings in relation to the status of the Persian Gulf States in accordance with the provisions of the Anglo-Saudi Treaty signed in Jedda in 1927 and on the basis of a mutual observance of the provisions of that treaty.

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Your distinguished statesmanship, great knowledge and experience of this region lead me to believe in all sincerity that you will co-operate with us and will act in such a way as to solve this problem. Thus a great service will be rendered in restoring the true amity and great friendship between us which is in our common interest.

With my best regards,

SAUD AL SAUD.

Riyadh.

Ramadan 20, 1375.

April 30, 1956.

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ES 1891/5

No. 22

**PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS BY HER MAJESTY'S
AMBASSADOR IN SAUDI ARABIA**

Mr. Parkes to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received May 8)

(No. 31. Confidential)
Sir,

Jedda,
May 2, 1956.

I have the honour to report that I returned to Saudi Arabia on the 26th of April, and barely three hours after my arrival was received by King Saud in the newest of his Jedda palaces where I presented my credentials. I was accompanied by the other members of my mission whom I introduced to His Majesty.

2. There was the usual exchange of courtesies. The fact that I had waited two months in vain at the end of 1955 for the King to receive me appeared not to embarrass him at all. No mention of this, naturally was made by either of us: indeed the King scrupulously avoided any direct reference to the present strained relations between his country and Great Britain. In presenting my credentials I said that it would be my earnest endeavour to work for the restoration of our traditional friendship, and these sentiments were echoed by the King with every show of sincerity.

3. As you are aware, my return to Saudi Arabia was planned to coincide with the arrival here of a mission headed by Mr. Dodds-Parker, Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, charged with resuming contact with the Saudi rulers and arranging further discussions of our differences. Shortly after I had presented my credentials Mr. Dodds-Parker was duly ushered into the throne room and, together with Mr. Samuel of Eastern Department and Mr. Rae, his private secretary, was introduced to King Saud. The following audience was brief and friendly, and followed in tone the reception I myself had received. Nothing of substance was mentioned and no allusion was made to the purpose of Mr. Dodds-Parker's presence in Saudi Arabia. The slight initial restraint apparent in the King's bearing was possibly due not so much to his feelings over Buraimi as to fatigue and hunger at the end of another day's fasting during this month of Ramadhan. For this reason I took my leave early of the King; in any case we were to meet in another hour's time for dinner.

4. The ceremonies of that afternoon were carried through with all the trappings which Saudi Arabia believes to belong to such an occasion. My progress to the palace may have lacked the stateliness associated with that of an Ambassador to the Court of St. James's, but by local standards it was impressive. Six outriders dressed in the style of American military police waved cars and kicked dogs out of our path; jeeps with machine-guns mounted preceded and followed me, the latter one with its muzzles pointed, somewhat alarmingly, at the back of my car; and a string of Cadillacs and Oldsmobiles followed with the members of my staff. So we sped against the traffic along the one-way streets and under the rickety festival arches that had been erected to greet the Imam Ahmed of the Yemen and Colonel Nasser of Egypt and which, draped with the flags of the signatories of the recent Jedda Pact, lent a curious ambivalence to this reception of a new British Ambassador. Arrived at the monstrous Metro-Goldwyn palace, I reviewed a guard of honour and was able to compliment their officer on its turnout without excessive insincerity.

5. The dinner that evening was by contrast an informal affair, in so far as anything could be informal in such garish surroundings. In spite of the 3,000 kW. which blazed around us, the vistas of Murano chandeliers, the vast stretches of banquet hall now for the most part empty, it was a friendly and simple occasion. The King had invited a few of his Ministers and a small selection of local notables. Prince Faisal, who is both Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, was also at the dinner. I found him at first somewhat morose and distant, but as dish succeeded indifferent dish he gradually thawed to me. By contrast the King, obviously relieved at having surmounted the credentials hurdle, was affability itself throughout the meal and our conversation never flagged despite the 10 feet or so of empty table which present-day Saudi Court etiquette apparently decrees

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between guests of honour and their royal host. Later, when we had taken coffee beside the sunken pool in the courtyard and I was preparing to leave, he took me by the hand and said for all to hear: "This is one of the happiest days of my life." He spoke feelingly and I have no doubt that at the time he meant it.

6. Thus had been achieved the first objective in our current series of manoeuvres with the Saudis. I had been received and presented my credentials; contact, in a more friendly atmosphere than I had expected, had been re-established; and, what may ultimately be of much benefit in my mission here, the personal relations between the King and myself gave every appearance of having got off to a good start.

7. Mr. Dodds-Parker and I left His Majesty agreeing that we would meet in Riyadh two days' later. The events there are described in my following despatch.

I have, &c.

R. W. PARKES.

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ES 1051/59

No. 23

ANGLO-SAUDI TALKS

Mr. Parkes to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received May 8)(No. 32. Secret)
Sir,Jedda,
May 2, 1956.

On the instructions contained in your despatch No. ES 1051/31 of the 24th of April I accompanied Mr. A. D. Dodds-Parker, Joint Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and Mr. A. C. I. Samuel, Assistant in Eastern Department, to Riyadh for talks with King Saud and his Foreign Minister, Crown Prince Faisal, on the 28th, 29th and 30th of April. With our mission were Mr. C. R. A. Rae of Mr. Dodds-Parker's staff and Mr. H. Phillips and Mr. S. J. G. Cambridge of this Embassy. On the Saudi side Prince Faisal was assisted by his deputy, Sheikh Yusuf Yasin, the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Sheikh Hafiz Wahba and—somewhat surprisingly—Dr. Mohammed Abdul Muni'm Mustafa, Joint Assistant Secretary of the Arab League, acting on this occasion as legal adviser to the Saudi Government.

2. Two hours after we had arrived in Riyadh on the morning of the 28th of April King Saud received Mr. Dodds-Parker and myself with Mr. Phillips. The audience lasted for an hour and, since His Majesty had already met the mission and entertained them to dinner in Jedda two days before, little time was wasted on formalities. Mr. Dodds-Parker was thus able quickly to explain the object of his mission and present Sir Anthony Eden's letter to the King, an Arabic translation of which was read out there and then by the interpreter. The King expressed his pleasure at receiving the Prime Minister's message, and assured us of his earnest desire to restore relations between our two countries to their former happy state. Prince Faisal, Yusuf Yasin and Hafiz Wahba, who were all present, nodded assent at this assurance.

3. Mr. Dodds-Parker took this cue to state firmly to the King that good relations were difficult to achieve without mutual confidence, and that the latter was sadly lacking at the present time. He went on to enumerate the many grievances which Her Majesty's Government would require to have redressed if mutual confidence was to be restored. At this the King asserted that so far as his Government were concerned there was only one obstacle to good relations, Buraimi. The British action there had been a blow to his personal honour and national dignity, the more so since he had inherited, not initiated, the dispute and the blow had fallen relatively early in his reign. He asked for nothing more than a just and honourable settlement. Once that was achieved, the minor irritations which Mr. Dodds-Parker had enumerated would disappear and the way would be opened to a new era of even friendlier relations between Great Britain and Saudi Arabia. Mr. Dodds-Parker did not allow King Saud to bask long in this illusory sunshine. He stressed again the importance of regaining confidence through the removal of smaller disputes first, and in this context took the opportunity of emphasising to His Majesty the menace of Communism in the Middle East and the purpose of the Bagdad Pact in opposing this danger. The King declared himself once again the bitter opponent of Communism but took issue with the Under-Secretary on the merits of the Bagdad Pact. Mr. Dodds-Parker then steered the conversation round again to the need for confidence between our two Governments and expressed the hope that His Majesty would ensure that the actions of his officials were in keeping with His Majesty's own assurances that it was not his desire to attack British interests in the Arabian Peninsula. The King repeated these assurances and then said he left it to Mr. Dodds-Parker to pursue more detailed discussions with Prince Faisal.

4. Accordingly, on the morning of the 29th of April, the entire British delegation met the Saudi negotiators. Prince Faisal began by answering the British grievances enumerated by Mr. Dodds-Parker. Allegations of Saudi gun-running into Aden, trouble-raising in Bahrain and intrigue against Oman were unfounded; the decision to expel the British anti-locust team was taken nearly six months ago; the Saudi-Egyptian-Yemeni Pact implied no threat to British interests; and Saudi

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opposition to the Bagdad Pact was a purely Arab affair and not an anti-British movement. Saudi Arabia, on the other hand, had a major grievance against Britain which was much bigger than any of Britain's grievances and which, if settled amicably, would lead to a solution of those grievances. That was Buraimi. Mr. Dodds-Parker was naturally prepared for this and said that whilst he understood how the Saudis felt about this latter we too felt thoroughly aggrieved here. He asked Prince Faisal to believe him when he said that British public opinion was thoroughly inflamed by Saudi misbehaviour both in Buraimi and elsewhere in the Middle East. He then returned to the question of mutual confidence. After much parrying of Faisal's arguments and thrusting of his own, in which he made it clear that in the matter of the frontiers Her Majesty's Government stood on the Prime Minister's statement of October 26, 1955, he was able to obtain Saudi agreement in principle to continuation of detailed talks, on the whole range of Anglo-Saudi problems, between Prince Faisal and myself at a later date. At this point the meeting adjourned so that the British side might consider the Saudi request that an agenda for these later talks should be drawn up at the present conference.

5. It seemed to us that Faisal was moving too fast and we decided to reply that the drawing up of an agenda belonged properly to the first round of the future talks. Mr. Dodds-Parker spoke accordingly at the afternoon meeting. It was evident that the Saudi side were disappointed and somewhat suspicious, but having already accepted the principle of substantive talks they were not in a position to object to our request to refer the matter of the agenda to London and discuss it at the first of those talks. Prince Faisal did, however, make it clear repeatedly that for his Government the Buraimi dispute remained the only item worth putting on any agenda. Mr. Dodds-Parker for his part did not fail to impress on the Foreign Minister that in the view of Her Majesty's Government there were many problems, other than Buraimi which stood in the way of good relations between our two countries. Prince Faisal took this surprisingly well, though somewhat forlornly, and the meeting ended with expressions of good will on both sides.

6. At the end of the meeting Mr. Dodds-Parker handed Prince Faisal a draft communiqué which, it was hoped, could be published jointly when the mission left. Next day, the 30th of April, it became clear that the Saudis wanted any such communiqué to highlight the fact that the Buraimi dispute had been discussed, to which we were of course opposed. After the King's farewell dinner for the mission the same evening Mr. Dodds-Parker arranged with His Majesty that, if agreement could not be reached on the text of a joint communiqué, none should be issued; and in the event that is what happened. In the same conversation King Saud confirmed that his Ministers were ready to enter into substantive talks later with me in Saudi Arabia; and added that he hoped that God would bless these and restore our relations to their former state.

7. Throughout its stay in Jedda and Riyadh the mission was most hospitably and cordially received by the King and his Ministers and officials. The Saudis were obviously out to create the best possible impression and joked and laughed with us at all the right times. When Mr. Dodds-Parker and his party left for Bahrain on the morning of the 1st of May they were flown there direct by a special Saudi aeroplane (duly cleared with Bahrain) which later returned to Riyadh to fly me and my staff back to Jedda. I do not doubt that King Saud would like to restore good relations with us, at his price. But equally I have no doubt that the Saudis know we will not pay this price. It is therefore difficult to understand what they hope to gain by an effusive show of friendship at this stage, and indeed so open a display might well have exposed the King to dangerous criticism from the tribes and religious leaders of the country. It may be that, after so long a period of inaction, it suits the Saudis internal book to show their own people that they are tackling the Buraimi problem again; whilst externally they demonstrate that Saudi Arabia, as well as Britain, is always prepared to negotiate a peaceful settlement. This latter aspect would be of value particularly in their relations with the Americans, who have kept their promise to us to urge Saudi acceptance of the principle of substantive talks to follow on Mr. Dodds-Parker's discussions.

8. I am confident that we have left the Saudi rulers under no misapprehension about our attitude to the Buraimi dispute in the coming talks. This is not to say that they are not hoping to manoeuvre or persuade us to concede something when

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I come to discuss the agenda; and I have no doubt that the instructions you will send me in this connection will not overlook this. My impression is, however, that the Saudi Government are going through the motions of friendly negotiation with their position *vis-à-vis* the Security Council as much in their minds as our position there is in ours. Whereas we should seek to establish, should these talks break down and the Saudis resort to that forum, that we were genuinely negotiating with the Saudis, and are always prepared to resume such negotiations, the Saudis would doubtless try to show the futility of any such endeavours. It is therefore important that the agenda for the forthcoming talks should be acceptable to the Saudis. On the condition, which I would hope to agree with them, that the talks should be confidential, it should be possible to arrive at a formula to cover discussion of Buraimi and the frontiers which, while not committing Her Majesty's Government, would be agreeable to the Saudis and stand us in good stead in any eventual proceedings in the Security Council. If this is attained we shall have entered into substantive talks which I may be able to continue over a period, and which would give us a good claim on American support in the Security Council and make it morally difficult for the Saudis to attempt any direct action for the time being against Buraimi.

9. Before concluding this despatch I should like, if I may, to pay a tribute to the skill with which Mr. Dodds-Parker discharged a particularly delicate mission. Coming as it did at the end of some arduous negotiations in Ethiopia his energy and patience were inexhaustible; and the mixture of official serenity and personal warmth which he administered to the Saudis was ideally suited to this intractable case.

10. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Political Resident in Bahrain, the Political Representative with the Middle East Forces, the United Kingdom Permanent Delegate to the United Nations in New York and Her Majesty's Ambassador in Washington.

I have, &c.

R. W. PARKES.

ES1051/63

No. 24

REPORT BY MR. DOUGLAS DODDS-PARKER ON HIS VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA, APRIL 26-MAY 1, 1956

I arrived in Jedda from Khartoum at noon on April 26 and was welcomed by such a crowd of dignitaries as could only, in the view of a Yemeni fellow-passenger, indicate the presence of Colonel Nasser. Her Majesty's Ambassador and Mr. Samuel had arrived in Jedda not more than two hours before.

2. The primary purpose of my visit was to re-establish contact with King Saud and pave the way for negotiations with his Government. These negotiations would make it easier for the Americans to support us and establish a position for ourselves should the Saudis take the Buraimi issue to the Security Council. My instructions, once contact had been resumed, were to show King Saud and his Government that we as well as they have grievances and to arrange the details of subsequent negotiations between the two Governments; I was not, however, to enter upon substantive discussions myself. A pre-condition of my visit was that the Saudis should agree to the long delayed presentation of Mr. Parkes' credentials.

3. Her Majesty's Ambassador presented his credentials to King Saud in Jedda at 5 o'clock the same afternoon. I myself, with Mr. Samuel and Mr. Rae, my Private Secretary, were received in public audience by the King immediately afterwards, and later that evening His Majesty entertained us all to a family supper of some fifty people in the 80-yard-long dining room of his new palace. Our talks on these occasions were confined to courtesies and expressions of goodwill. The atmosphere was friendly and relaxed, and the King expressed his pleasure at "having his friends with him again."

4. The King's entertainment of us was on an oriental scale. Both in Jedda and Riyadh not less than four air-conditioned Chryslers and Cadillacs were at our disposal throughout the day. In Jedda the King had reserved for us four suites in the Kandara Palace Hotel. In fact we stayed at Her Majesty's Embassy, but took some meals at the hotel. April 27 being the Muslim sabbath (and a sabbath in Ramadan at that) we remained in Jedda; we followed the King to Riyadh on Saturday, April 28, leaving Jedda at 4.30 a.m. Her Majesty's Ambassador joined my party with Messrs. Phillips and Cambridge of his staff. In Riyadh we were all accommodated, again at the royal expense, in the Riyadh Hotel, so newly built that our rooms were still liberally scattered with shavings. We remained in this air-conditioned discomfort for three days, only leaving it for our official calls and for two sight-seeing tours of the dusty dun-coloured capital.

5. The King received me for an hour on the morning of April 28. I told him that I had come to prepare the way for the re-establishment of good relations between us; it was clear that the problems between our two Governments had led to a lack of confidence; the Prime Minister and Foreign Secretary had sent me to talk to the King personally in order to try to restore this confidence: I gave His Majesty the letter which I bore from the Prime Minister (text at Annex A⁽¹⁾), which was read out to him in Arabic. King Saud welcomed the letter and my mission, and hoped that it would lead to a solution of our problems. He made it clear at once that for him the only real problem was Buraimi; it affected the national prestige and his personal dignity; but he hoped that bygones could be bygones and that we could now enter into a new era of friendship.

6. At this point the King made as if to hand me over to Prince Faisal. But I said that I was under instructions to let him know personally the grievances and some of the main points which I had for discussion. I pointed out that we and our friends also felt strongly about Buraimi; everyone had been pleased by the signature of the Arbitration Agreement of 1954; it was unfortunate that Saudi bribery, of which we had solid evidence, had destroyed the whole basis of arbitration. I went on to specify the six main grievances which we had against the Saudi Government, and answered in advance the criticisms which I thought they had against us. I assured him in particular that any stories he might have heard

(¹) Not printed.

that we were using our position in the Persian Gulf and our friendship with the Hashemite Kings to undermine the House of Saud, were groundless. The King once again made it clear that he was only interested in Buraimi, but he hoped that with goodwill a way could be found towards a solution. At this request I gave him a list of our grievances, to which, he said, Prince Faisal would give me a reply next day.

7. Prince Faisal, who was I think genuinely unwell, was an hour late for our first meeting next morning. Our two meetings were held in the Cabinet Room. The Foreign Minister was accompanied by the Iscariot-faced Sheikh Yusuf Yasin (deputy Foreign Minister), Sheikh Hafiz Wahba (Saudi Ambassador in London), and Dr. Abdul Moneim Mustapha, whose function, according to Sheikh Hafiz was "to take notes for the Security Council." I had with me Her Majesty's Ambassador and all the members of my mission. Prince Faisal began by reading a prepared reply to my list of grievances. He denied all our charges—that the Saudi Government were responsible for smuggling arms into Aden, that they interfered in Oman or had raised the question in the Arab League, that they had fomented trouble in Bahrain and that the Jedda Pact was directed against Aden. The decision to expel the British locust team had been taken five months ago on account of "certain activities" by some of its members. As regards the Bagdad Pact, he was not interested to know whether or not it contained secret clauses; that was a matter for the participants. He emphasised that Saudi hostility to the Pact was not aimed at Britain and would continue even if Anglo-Saudi differences were resolved. There was only one major difference between us, whose solution would solve all other Anglo-Saudi difficulties.

8. I could not let this perfunctory dismissal of our grievances go without comment. I returned to the charge, but unavailing, about the Bagdad Pact. I repeated some of the assurances which I had given to the King. I said that while I accepted Prince Faisal's and the King's assurances, we should have to see whether their officials acted in the same spirit. I pointed to the use that Saut al Arab was making of the Jedda Pact and stressed that the chief sufferers from the expulsion of the locust team would be not Her Majesty's Government but hundreds of thousands of fellow Arabs and Muslims. I believe in fact that the Saudis would be ready to yield on this point—but at a price which we could not pay. I was careful to make clear that I was not prepared to bargain Buraimi for satisfaction on this or on any of the other issues. On Buraimi itself I said I understood the strength of Saudi feelings; but we and our friends also had strong feelings; we stood by the Prime Minister's statement of October 26. We were ready to consider minor rectifications of the frontier, and the question of the exiles, and to consider the reasons why the 1935 negotiations had broken down. Basically, however, there was a crisis of confidence; I suggested therefore that it might be better to begin discussion of small issues first.

9. Prince Faisal was not impressed by this suggestion, nor by my assurances, nor by my efforts to put the Buraimi affair into a "world perspective." My mention of "minor rectification" cast an evident chill on the meeting. Prince Faisal agreed, however, to put to the King my suggestion that further talks should be conducted by Mr. Parkes in Saudi Arabia. He enquired about my views on the agenda. I read to him the list of points which we had in mind; but I felt that it might be dangerous to put this in writing without further reflection, and therefore asked for an adjournment.

10. At the afternoon session I said that I considered that the formal drawing up of an agenda would be more appropriately done at the first substantive meeting of the negotiations, and that I myself ought before this to return and report to you. This was accepted and the meeting broke up shortly afterwards. Prince Faisal said that he had had enough of expressions of goodwill and stressed that in his view, unless the question of Buraimi was solved, the other problems were not worth solving. He felt, however, that we could both be satisfied that neither party had evil intentions against the other, and our parting was quite friendly.

11. I had asked for an audience with the King next day, but I was not received until after the supper to which the King invited members of my mission in the Old Palace. (The old New Palace, built five years ago, has been pulled down as not quite big enough and is being reconstructed on a gigantic scale.) The

(¹) Not printed.

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Prime Minister did not attend this meal and I therefore asked the King for, and obtained, his assurance that further negotiations should be conducted by Mr. Parkes. The King handed me his reply to the Prime Minister's letter (Annex B).(¹) Despite the uncompromising tone of this document, King Saud's attitude to Her Majesty's Ambassador and myself was very forthcoming—Messrs. Phillips and Cambridge said that they had never seen him in such cordial mood—and cannot have passed unnoticed by the serried ranks of the Royal Bodyguard and Egyptian "Advisers." (Because these latter were always around I did not have an opportunity to warn the King of the dangers of association with Colonel Nasser.)

12. There remained the question of a communiqué. I attach at Annex C(¹) the draft which I handed to Prince Faisal at the end of our second meeting. The alternative second paragraph is a redraft which we tried out on Sheikh Hafiz Wahba, who was acting as an informal go-between and thought it might be acceptable. But despite my personal appeal to the King, who appeared sympathetic, the Saudis would not agree to a joint communiqué which did not contain a statement that our discussions were concerned "especially with Buraimi" and were unwilling to state publicly that further talks would be held with Mr. Parkes. Although the King's advisers were divided, they did not budge from this position.

13. We left Riyadh at 9.15 a.m. on Tuesday, May 1, in a Convair airliner which the King put at my disposal. After a final taste of Saudi hospitality at Dhahran, we landed at Bahrain at noon. The request for clearance which I had telegraphed to Sir Bernard Burrows at lunch time the previous day, arrived some ten hours after I did.

14. By any standards it had been an odd negotiation. Our major requirements (the re-establishment of contact and the acceptance of Her Majesty's Ambassador) were met before I arrived. Nevertheless, the visit seems to have been worthwhile. We know where the Saudis stand and I left them in no doubt where we stand. They have accepted that further discussions shall take place, and take place, moreover, where we want them. I was surprised how readily the Saudis yielded on this point. They for their part would seem to have obtained little, apart from the satisfaction of a Ministerial visit. Yet despite plain speaking on both sides—they claimed to be much pained by my use of the word "bribery"—they received us with every cordiality. I am therefore tempted to conclude, having made all allowances for Arab courtesy, that they are genuinely anxious to overcome the *impasse* in Anglo-Saudi relations. Perhaps they dislike as much as we do the prospect of an appeal to the Security Council; at least they know that we found some nasty skeletons in their cupboard. It may be that they are not less attracted than ourselves, and for much the same reasons, by the prospect of a leisurely negotiation which will keep the ball in play. This is not to say, however, that we shall easily persuade them to resign themselves to the loss of Buraimi.

14. In conclusion, I would pay two particular tributes. First, on the Saudi side, to Sheikh Hafiz Wahba. Though he cuts little ice from his post in London, his knowledge of the British attitude to things seems to be heard with respect in Riyadh; he was very useful to me as an intermediary. Secondly, on the British side, to Mr. Phillips, First Secretary at Her Majesty's Embassy, who has now served in Jedda for three years without break, and as *chargé d'affaires* for about half that time. His expert knowledge of the Buraimi background and of Saudi *mores* was of the greatest value in our discussions; and I am sure that the efficiency and high morale which I found in the embassy staff are due to him in no small measure. Lastly, I must thank all other members of the embassy staff who laboured so hard for a busy five days, and in particular those who endured Riyadh with me (Messrs. Parkes, Phillips, Cambridge and Giles)—and Messrs. Samuel and Rae who ensured that our "publications," if not my speeches, were diplomatically phrased.

DOUGLAS DODDS-PARKER.

(¹) Not printed.

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No. 25

SAUDI ARABIA: KING SAUD'S CHARACTER AND POLICY

Mr. Parkes to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received May 24)

(No. 35. Confidential)
Sir,Jedda,
May 20, 1956.

Having had to wait six months for an opportunity to make King Saud's acquaintance I naturally approached our first meeting with some interest. I now have the honour to record my preliminary impressions.

2. The King's photographs make him look older than he appears in the flesh. He impressed me as being in excellent health, apart from his abnormally weak eye-sight; relaxed and generally pleased with himself. Despite increasing weight he is not undignified and has a measure of charm. His mental attainments are obviously not great—I understand he is virtually illiterate—but he is certainly capable of connected thought and exposition. In general I should say he was fairly simple, certainly impulsive, but not without a degree of shrewdness and a good deal of the natural cunning and dissemblance of the tribesman. Vanity and arrogance are both there in full measure, the latter fairly carefully concealed under a cloak of superficial good manners, and he could be extremely petty. I understand, for example, that much of his personal feeling against Iraq stems from the failure of the then Prince Regent to pay him a condolence visit at the time of his father's death.

3. I should judge that King Saud was capable of having views of his own though exposed day in and day out to the self-interested advice of ageing foreign counsellors—amongst whom Abdur Rahman Azzan appears positively youthful. These latter are, of course, influential, but need to step warily and serve up the advice the King wants to hear. Anything unpalatable would have to be wrapped up so carefully as to be virtually unintelligible, since Saud has a quick temper. The luxury and circumstance with which he surrounds himself combine to make him markedly soft, dangerously confident in an ivory castle sort of way and alarmingly oblivious of, or complacent about, the rude facts of 20th century life. Yet my prevalent impression is one of loneliness and insecurity. He is lonely because like every

oriental with absolute power he feels he can trust no one. Insecure because *au fond* he is far from sure of himself.

4. So much for the outward appearance of the man. What, as my American colleague would doubtless say, makes him tick? Here I should say the key lies in the distinguished career of Ibn Saud, whose handling of this rather disappointing son—born on the day the father, with a handful of companions, recaptured Riyadh—was scarcely inspired and has given Saud a deep-seated inferiority complex. This career over-shadows and haunts him, and like every oriental Richard Cromwell who succeeds an Oliver he feels he must go one better, or at any rate run very fast indeed in order to stand still. This pattern of behaviour was all too familiar in the old India of the Princes, and the eruption of extravagant palaces and grandiose new buildings in Riyadh and elsewhere is one strikingly confirmatory symptom. Take for example, the Riyadh race-course. King Ibn Saud, until his death, enlivened the tedium of life in the desert capital by driving out most evenings to watch horse racing. Here, in what was once desert but upon which Saudi ribbon development is fast encroaching, is a simple stone erection which served him as a stand. Some rugs probably sufficed the old King and a few companions; and the new oil revenues did not cause him to change his ways. The son, however, who is not even particularly interested in racing, has felt obliged to construct a fairly elaborate set of stands with a Royal Box (all it lacks is a totalisator) and a more or less conventional race track—just in front of the old stone stand. Filial piety prevents the latter's removal, but it is now not maintained and will doubtless soon go the way of all relics in the desert.

5. If the above analysis is correct it could shed some light on King Saud's basic policies in the Arabian peninsula and the Middle East generally. It is relevant if, as I believe, he is no mere puppet despite his obvious limitations. As I understand it his father had two basic aims during the major part of his life, to consolidate and expand the Saudi position in Arabia and to keep

on good terms with Britain, for whose strength and endurance he had a wholesome, if self-interested, respect. By 1947, however, Ibn Saud saw the dissolution of the Indian Empire and, more important, the formidable Indian army. As a result the British position in the peripheral Persian Gulf shaikhdoms, the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman and Aden and the Protectorates was proportionately weakened. At the same time the United States was in full ascendance and Aramco was beginning to yield glittering prizes. So his nibbles in the East became serious bites, witness the Saudi 1949 claim; and the new American connection began to oust the familiar British one. If Ibn Saud's earlier policies were based on "camel diplomacy," towards the end he was turning more and more to "Cadillac diplomacy."

6. King Saud, as he never fails to point out, inherited and did not initiate the Buraimi dispute. He also inherited this restless new diplomacy, with its Egyptian tie up and involvement in Arab League politics, general needling of Britain and coterie of Aramco and other alien advisers. He saw no reason to question its wisdom: in any case it seemed to be paying off. So he drifted with the tide. As I have already suggested, the insignificant son of an illustrious father could not afford to stand still. At the same time Sheikh Yusuf Yasin, his Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister and (then) principal counsellor, was assuring him that Britain was a spent force. If Saud had to emulate the Red Queen in which direction must he run, to keep pace with his dead father and remain on the throne? I believe he concluded that nothing else than the possession of the entire Arabian peninsula would meet his need: and that this, despite his present protestations, remains his goal to-day. I attach a translation of a recent article in a hireling Syrian newspaper which conveniently summarises such a policy.

7. Our reoccupation of the Buraimi Oasis on the 26th of October certainly came as a severe shock to King Saud. But if his family pride and personal prestige were wounded so also was his inner confidence. He had in fact made a miscalculation and Yusuf Yasin had let him down. There was still some life left in the lion, money was not everything and Colonel Nasser was not really interested. His every impulse was to do something spectacular, but innate indecision and the unanimous advice of a strange assortment of counsellors—the American Ambassador, Colonel Nasser,

Iskander Mirza and possibly Mr. Nehru—prevailed.

8. In his present dilemma, and the loneliness to which suspicion of all and sundry condemns him, I believe King Saud is being given to think. On the one hand Cadillac diplomacy points its slick, gaseous way: maximum pressure on anti-colonial lines *à la mode de* Bandung, ceaseless propaganda and subversion coupled with an injured innocent approach to the Security Council. But this is somewhat unfamiliar ground for an erstwhile camel diplomat. Deeply involved though he is with Egypt he cannot but have some inner qualms about Nasser, with his ever-widening defence pacts and complacent supping with the Soviet devil. The supply of Communist arms to the Yemen, which he despises, can also scarcely be welcome. Over and above the tangle of Arab League politics world politics are now intruding, Mr. Nehru's neutralism and the like. It is one thing to be a globe-trotting Haroun-al-Rashid but quite another to be an international politician. Certainly, he might reason, it is sound to try to destroy the Bagdad Pact, since this grouping might help the Hashemites and strengthen the British—afford them an ingenious alternative to the old Indian army which could check Saudi expansion. But the instinct of self-preservation is strong in any autocrat. Is it wise to expose the Saudi tribal régime to the full stresses of this strange, if brave, new world?

9. It would be odd if, in these circumstances, King Saud were not to wonder what his illustrious father would have done. Would he have pressed the accelerator or taken up the camel goad? Certainly he would not have abandoned his ultimate aims. But, equally certainly, he would have looked very carefully before he leapt. Would he have accepted the advice of Azzam and others, and taken the calculated risk of an appeal to the Security Council? Or would he have once again revised his estimate of these infuriating British and decided, despite the advice of the counsellors, to pause awhile and probe the British position; to try the effect of a little soft soap and flattery and see if this mixture would work again?

10. The above is, of course, speculation. But it affords the only explanation which fits one fact of which I have not the slightest doubt—the genuine relief and pleasure, not only of the King but also of those Saudis (as opposed to alien advisers and hangers-

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on) who form his entourage, at receiving Mr. Dodds-Parker's mission. The devils they knew were in fact back again, and they felt the securer for it.

11. If I am right in thinking that King Saud, despite his advisers, is beginning to have doubts about the wisdom of the new diplomacy, then I think it is emphatically in our interest to bring him down on the side of the camel. To foster these doubts, and push him in the way we want him to go, I think we must do the following things:—

(a) Continue to avoid the slightest sign of weakness.

This extends to our public comment no less than to our actions. We simply must not refer to reverses in the Middle East as "diplomatic defeats" or the like. Anyone dealing with volatile Arabs will have upsets but British policy must appear to sweep on unperturbed.

Naturally there must be no suggestion of yielding over any frontiers with Saudi Arabia. If I am able to prosecute my forthcoming talks with Prince Feisal it will be important to set out our grievances with firmness and in maximum detail. Over Buraimi the balance between taking so ostensibly inflexible a line as to wreck the talks *ab initio* and holding out hopes of minor relaxations will be a fine one.

(b) Seek to build up in the Saudi mind the impression of a strong, united Bagdad Pact.

Saudi hostility to the Bagdad Pact could not be fiercer than it is at present. But the stronger the Pact becomes the greater will be their respect for it. At present Prince Feisal attacks it, in dealing with my Pact colleagues, on the lines of: "You see, you will get nothing out of it." This underlines the paramount importance, both inside and outside the Pact countries, of seeing that our allies get substantial, well-publicised, assistance.

If, in the peculiar conditions of this country, it is too much to hope for a strong Anglo-American front let us at least have a strong Bagdad Pact front. If the Saudis suspect that this grouping is taking the place of the old Indian army *tant mieux*. We should of course lose no opportunity of stressing its anti-Communist,

defensive *raison d'être* for tactical reasons. This will answer, but not solace, the Saudis.

(c) Handle nationalism in Bahrain, Aden and Cyprus with firmness and restraint.

Events in Bahrain, Aden and Cyprus are closely watched here and are likely to have strong repercussions. We should seek to give the impression of absolute determination to preserve law and order. We understand and sympathise with national aspirations but the pace of advance will be ours (or the Sheikh's) and no one else's, in the true interests of the areas. It is relevant that the recent hanging of the two Greek Cypriots was interpreted locally as a sign of our resolution and occasioned no criticism.

(d) Avoid any impression of oversensitivity to irresponsible propaganda, notably Sawt al Arab.

Sawt al Arab is acknowledged here as a useful weapon for rabble-rousing but discounted as "propaganda" (with which the educated Arab is already saturated). Saudi sensitivity to counter-attack in this field is no less than that of the Egyptians. Measures to strengthen the Bahrain and Aden stations would impress the Saudis much more than protests; and occasional doses of their own medicine, particularly if identifiable as retaliation, would be salutary.

(e) Press on with measures to detach Saudi Arabia from Egypt.

Since my return I have heard a number of reports of Saudi uneasiness at the alliance with Revolutionary Egypt. At the same time we should realise, not only how deeply involved the Saudis are but also how serious the consequences might be of any sudden withdrawal. Saud and his régime would be a sitting target for Sawt al Arab, and Egyptian fury with the defaulting paymaster can be imagined. I am inclined to think that the fundamental dissimilarities between the two countries will, and should, largely do the job for us; and that the process should be a gradual one to avoid a violent Egyptian *riposte*, notably in the shape of another military *coup d'état*.

I see no harm in the Americans conveying a formal warning to the King; but any such warning from us might, I suspect, boomerang by rousing his suspicions. The best media will be carefully selected personalities from among our Muslim friends, each of whom should—in different ways so as to avoid the semblance of collusion—seek to maintain a constant drip of poison.

(f) Winkle out the counsellors.

This is easier said than done. For one thing the King would be most reluctant to dismiss any of his father's advisers, particularly in view of their long residence in this country. At first sight those I met seemed too old to be formidable, but any recommendations here need time and careful study. Only the Americans can tackle Aramco, whose influence I regard as far and away the most undesirable of all those to which King Saud is subjected.

12. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Cairo, Washington and Beirut, the Political Resident at Bahrain and the Political Office with the Middle East Forces at Nicosia.

I have, &c.

R. W. PARKES.

Enclosure

Al Ayam, Damascus,
April 5, 1956.

The editor of *Al Ayam* talked to us in one of his articles about the general

development taking place in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and about the efforts of the Saudi Government to raise the prestige of the number one Arab country to which Moslems in all parts of the world turn their hearts.

Every Arab feels a great happiness to see the Arabian deserts being slowly converted into a fine and lively expanse. The Arab, however, is not content with this and wants more. He expects of this nascent State, and of its great King, to undertake to unify the entire Arab Peninsula as a first step towards the desired Arab unity. It is not the mission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to be satisfied with demanding her rights in Buraimi. It is also her mission to demand Bahrain, Oman, Muscat and all the protectorates littered here and there which have been subjected for decades to the nightmare of British colonialism.

None of these protectorates will ever be of use to the Arabs and to Arabism unless they are incorporated in one unity, in a big Arab State which has big resources, resolve and good administration.

Fortunately this big Arab State is available and I see no better and stronger geographical, natural and social unity than that of amalgamation between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the adjacent protectorates.

Let those responsible in this nascent State work for this end and they may rest assured that 90 million Arabs stand behind them and would bless and sponsor this step.

Advocate

BASSAM KADDOURA.

ES 1051/91

No. 26

ANGLO-SAUDI TALKS ON BURAIMI

Mr. Parkes to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received June 21)(No. 41. Confidential)
Sir,Jedda,
June 17, 1956.

In my telegrams Nos. 7⁽¹⁾ and 9⁽¹⁾ from Riyadh of June 13-14 respectively I summarised the salient points of the two meetings I had there with Prince Faisal, the Saudi Arabian Minister for Foreign Affairs, on the subject of Anglo-Saudi talks. I now have the honour to describe in more detail the course of the discussions, a verbatim record of which forms an appendix to this despatch.

2. I arrived in Riyadh shortly after 7 a.m. June 11 but it was not until 8.30 p.m. that I was able to see Prince Faisal. Throughout the day I had been fobbed off with a variety of excuses, and when after the usual exchange of courtesies I offered to begin our official business the Prince—in some alarm—explained that since this was merely a courtesy call—he had not briefed himself. This puzzled me until I overheard a whispered exchange between Faisal and the only adviser present, Sheikh Khalid Abu Walid, from which I deduced that the Prince was anxious that Sheikh Yusuf Yasin and the Egyptian legal adviser Dr. Abdul Moneim Mustapha, should also participate in our talks. These latter two had presumably been engaged in discussing terms for the renewal of the Dhahran Air Base Agreement with my American colleague and were still in Dhahran with King Saud. When we finally met for our discussions, therefore, at 10 a.m. on the following morning, I was able to greet Sheikh Yusuf with unwonted pleasure, not only at the vindication of my incipient Arabic but also at the thought that he had been obliged to make as early a start from Dhahran that morning as I had from Jedda 24 hours earlier.

3. The Saudi side was thus fully represented at the meetings. As later events went to show I have little doubt that the Saudis had decided in advance to force the pace if they did not receive satisfaction; and this, Prince Faisal evidently felt, was a step which required not only the support and presence of all the advisers available but also, as I shall explain later, the final approval of the King himself.

4. I spoke first and argued the merits of the particular ordering of the items in our draft agenda which, on your instructions, I had presented to the Saudis on May 19 (your telegrams Nos. 375⁽¹⁾ and 376⁽¹⁾ of May 17). For convenience I attach a copy of this draft agenda to this despatch. I emphasised the importance we attached to a carefully drawn up agenda and stressed the wisdom of discussing lesser items before tackling major problems.

5. I naturally did not expect Prince Faisal to accept these arguments and his reply repeated the usual tale of outraged Saudi pride. Buraimi for them was more than a problem: it was a question of national dignity. He then introduced an idea which he represented as unpremeditated but proceeded to develop with confidence as the talks progressed. This was that the Buraimi question should be split into two parts. First, and preliminary to the talks, a "temporary settlement," "a kind of restoration of the *status quo*" or "some return to normal conditions." This would constitute a concrete and tangible action which they, the Saudi negotiators, could show their people and thus assuage its wounded feelings. The second part of the question would of course concern "the final solution" and would naturally be an item on the agenda, though this was not made explicit until the second meeting.

6. I suggested that the fact that talks were in progress should help to relax tension in Saudi Arabia as well as in Britain, and that in any case there was no need to publish the agenda. Prince Faisal, however, persisted in arguing for some sop to Saudi pride and spoke feelingly of the dignity of "us Saudis," looking for agreement to the others seated at the table, to wit two Egyptians, two Syrians and a Tripolitanian. I replied that Saudi Arabia had no monopoly of outraged feelings over Buraimi; and that in the matter of gestures made the two sides were also even. If, as Faisal now claimed, King Saud had made a gesture in receiving me, you, Sir,

⁽¹⁾ Not printed.

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had made an equally generous gesture in sending to Riyadh Mr. Dodds-Parker. Having made this point I thought it best to introduce the compromise solution for which you had given me discretion in your telegram No. 393 of May 28 before the emotional balance was again upset by further talk of Saudi pride. I therefore added that I should be prepared to recommend that we might compromise between discussing Buraimi first, as Prince Faisal plainly wished, and ninth, as had been Her Majesty's Government's idea, by placing some version of his suggested first part fifth.

7. This suggestion was brushed aside, and when I pressed it again later Prince Faisal replied that he had not examined it thoroughly because it concerned the talks themselves. What he was intent on at present was something preliminary to the talks. He then suggested that he put in a list of requirements "to quieten national feeling." It was now clear, and indeed had been for some time, that the Prince's "spontaneous" suggestion about dividing the Buraimi question into two parts was to be pressed home at all costs. I had little doubt in my own mind of the form the list of requirements would take, but thought it would not look well to refuse to see it. Above all else I was intent on showing in these discussions that at every step we were, and had been, entirely reasonable. This of course was intended for the benefit, not of the Saudis who would not recognise reasonableness if it were thrust under their noses, but of the Americans and other members of the Security Council. For it was now clear that such considerations were looming closer.

8. I therefore agreed to see what Prince Faisal had to suggest; and contented myself with saying that Her Majesty's Government too might well have some practical suggestions which they would wish me to make.

9. It was not until the evening of the following day that Prince Faisal's suggestions were finally communicated to me. Once again the reason for the delay was not difficult to find. King Saud had all this while been on the east coast and was expected to return on Tuesday evening (the day of the first meeting). In the event, he did not return until 4 p.m. on Wednesday. Prince Faisal obviously felt that the step he was about to take was of sufficient moment to merit having the King's final approval. Their deliberations, however, did not take long and Sheikh Yusuf Yasin was round at my hotel at 7.30 p.m. to hand me, with a self-satisfied smile, a document which his secretary had translated as follows:—

"The Saudi Arabian side, desirous of creating a favourable atmosphere for carrying out discussions with the British side, suggests:—

1. Withdrawal, from all disputed areas, of troops stationed there.
2. Repatriation of all inhabitants of those territories who have been expelled therefrom, the resumption of their normal activities with assured freedom of movement, restitution of all their movable and immovable property, and payment of equitable indemnities for any damage incurred.
3. Re-entrusting the original inhabitants of those areas with the duty of maintaining law and order.
4. The setting up in the area of a supervisory administration by a number of neutral States that have no direct interests in the areas concerned, pending a conclusion of the dispute."

It was suggested that I should discuss these four items with Prince Faisal the following morning, Thursday, June 14.

10. My conclusion that the Saudis had now embarked on a deliberate and thought out plan of forcing an issue was confirmed at the second meeting by their evident lack of interest in what was going on. Prince Faisal seemed bored and more intent on examining the workings of his ball-point pen than in arguing a case. Sheikh Yusuf Yasin doodled unconcernedly. This however was to my advantage since I could make my points without opposition and direct the discussions as I wished. I was by now intent on forcing Prince Faisal to take up as intransigent an attitude as possible, while at the same time showing ourselves as both moderate and reasonable.

11. I accordingly repeated, largely for the record, our attitude both towards the agenda and the question of outraged feelings. I explained that Prince Faisal's list of requirements ignored completely the basis of the talks which had been agreed

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with Mr. Dodds-Parker and their essentially reciprocal nature. I repeated what had been said on that earlier occasion, namely that the Prime Minister's statement of October 26 last year represented the fundamental policy of Her Majesty's Government; but that in the talks we might discuss minor rectifications of the line, examine the problem of the Buraimi exiles and then, with confidence restored, go on to examine the reasons for the breakdown of the 1935 frontier negotiations. These had been defined by us as the subjects of discussion and the Saudi side had not then demurred. Items 1 and 4 of the present list of Saudi preconditions went well outside such a field of discussion, and in any case any discussion of such items now was tantamount to discussing the question of Buraimi first; and this too without establishing that mutual confidence which Her Majesty's Government thought essential, and in a form which did not even correspond with the description of the item on our draft agenda.

12. Prince Faisal was thus forced into a number of fairly dogmatic statements. First, and largely irrelevant, that if Her Majesty's Government refused to budge from the statement of October 26 there was no point in the negotiations. Second—and this point I made him repeat beyond all peradventure—that either we agree to the four preconditions *in toto*, in which case the Buraimi question might be placed second on the agenda; or else that the question of Buraimi “in all its forms” must be placed first on the agenda. Intransigence could scarcely go further.

13. At this stage I said I must reserve my position and seek instructions. I would not comment on the insinuation that the Prime Minister's statement of October 26 was our last word since to discuss even this would be in effect to discuss the Buraimi question in an unprepared atmosphere. Prince Faisal then showed some controlled impatience and said he hoped my instructions would come soon. They had, he said, been patient long enough; and on this note of unilateral urgency the meeting broke up.

14. So much for the discussions themselves. In my immediately following despatch I offer some comments and deductions.

15. I am sending copies of this despatch and its enclosures to Her Majesty's Ambassador in Washington, the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, the Head of the United Kingdom Delegation in New York and the Political Officer with the Middle East Forces.

I have, &c.

R. W. PARKES.

Enclosure 1 to No. 26

DRAFT AGENDA

1. Frontiers between Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia and Kuwait neutral zone.
2. Islands claimed by Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.
3. Islands claimed by Kuwait and for the neutral zone.
4. Joint proclamation with Kuwait over the neutral zone seabed.
5. Frontiers between Saudi Arabia and Qatar.
6. Sea-bed frontier between Saudi Arabia and Bahrain.
7. Relations between Saudi Arabia on the one hand and the Persian Gulf shajkhdoms and Aden Protectorate on the other.
8. Exchange of views on the situation in the Middle East, in particular external and internal Communist threats to the area.
9. Matters arising out of the Buraimi dispute.
10. Expulsion of the British Locust Mission.

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Enclosure 2

RECORD OF A MEETING HELD IN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS BUILDING, RIYADH, ON JUNE 12, 1956 BETWEEN 10 a.m. AND 11.40 a.m.

Mr. Parkes
Mr. Cambridge

Prince Feisal
Sheikh Yusuf Yasin
Sheikh Khalid abu Walid
Dr. Abdul Moneim Mustapha
Sheikh Mamdouh Adib
Sheikh Abdul Aziz Margib

The Ambassador opened by saying that he was afraid that he was going to be a little unpopular because he wanted to discuss the draft agenda he had sent Prince Feisal, and he wanted to argue about it. He made no apology for this because the framing of an agenda was an important stage in any talks.

It was true to say that an agenda could make or mar talks. An agenda was the steel frame round which the body of the subsequent discussions took shape. If it was drawn up with care and forethought it could contribute greatly to their success. If it was drawn up hastily and without thought it could ruin them. Britain as a country had had considerable experience with conferences and it had been their experience that it was always better to start with minor points and work through to major points, creating and building confidence on the way. The Ambassador realised very clearly how strongly the Saudi Arabian Government felt over the problem of Buraimi. In particular he appreciated how deeply and personally His Majesty the King felt on this subject. But he hoped that the Saudi Arabian Government also realised how strongly Her Majesty's Government felt on a number of points, such as those which had been outlined by Mr. Dodds-Parker when he had been in Riyadh. An Ambassador had many duties—one was to interpret public opinion in the country to which he was accredited to his Government at home; but it was also his duty to interpret public opinion at home to the country to which he was accredited. Mr. Dodds-Parker and he had tried to explain how public opinion was running in their country. The fact of the matter was that there was a lack of confidence on both sides. He wanted to give an instance to show what he was talking about. He had read in *The Times* the other day of a Question in the Lords asked by Lord Vansittart, who had been Permanent Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs until 1941. Lord Vansittart had asked why it was necessary to maintain an Ambassador in a hostile country like Saudi Arabia. Lord Reading had answered that well; the fact that there were differences between the two countries was all the more reason for having an Ambassador. As His Royal Highness knew, there had also been quite a lot of hostile comment in the British Press. The Ambassador's presence in Saudi Arabia and the fact that he was discussing with His Royal Highness the preliminaries of talks for the settling of their differences had, he thought, had a good effect. As he saw it, there had been a certain détente in critical public opinion at home. In Saudi Arabia too he hoped that there had been some good effect. He assured His Royal Highness that he had met with nothing but friendliness and good-will from everyone he had met in Jedda. The propaganda truce between the two countries had also been helpful—although of course there had been complaints on both sides as His Royal Highness knew very well.

In this delicate task of trying to rebuild confidence and working towards a settlement of all their differences, he was most anxious to give of his best, and he was particularly anxious that these talks should not suffer any premature breakdown. In the matter of the agenda he had to reconcile two points of view. As he understood it, the Saudi Arabian Government's viewpoint was that they should first discuss and settle what they regarded as the main problem and then turn to the lesser ones. This was of course a strictly logical point of view granted the Saudi premises. On the other hand his Government felt that they should first (as he had said before) discuss and agree over the minor points, building up confidence as they went, and then take the psychological moment for dealing with

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the major problems. His Government had drawn up the agenda and the order of the items after considerable thought. They considered that the best means of arriving at a settlement of all their differences was to tackle the problems in that order. The Ambassador knew that His Royal Highness had not known him long, but he hoped that by now he felt some trust in him. His only motive was to restore the traditional friendship between the two countries. He hoped that His Majesty had sensed that sincerity in him, because in a very kind letter he had wished him success in his Mission "in the interests of both countries." It was his honest belief that the order in which the agenda had been prepared offered the best chance of success. He believed in all sincerity that in these talks it was a case of more haste less speed. He would therefore make a sincere plea that His Royal Highness and the Saudi Government should accept the agenda as it stood.

Prince Feisal thanked the Ambassador for his statement, and assured him that the Saudi desire to reach a settlement was, if not perhaps greater, then certainly as great as the British. This was not for them a matter of mere inclination, but of belief. It was in the interests of both Governments. It was unfortunate that there had recently been some parties in Great Britain who felt that Saudi Arabia was hostile: perhaps at times in communications between the two Governments even the British Government itself sensed this. He requested the Ambassador to uproot this idea once and for all. They were not enemies. They did not wish to be enemies. As long as they were able to keep their friendship with Great Britain they would do so. It was their belief and conviction that this was in the interests of both parties. There were times when they might differ, but it was necessary to reach agreement. On the subject of the agenda—inasmuch as the Ambassador was entitled to express the views of his Government and public opinion in his country, so too, he hoped, were the Saudi Arabian side. His Excellency had mentioned that the British had the same feelings about certain subjects as the Saudis had over Buraimi. That may be: but the Ambassador would agree that the main cause of the trouble was the Buraimi question. So there was no point in trying to deal with some secondary points without treating the main points first. (At this point Prince Feisal turned to Khalid and Yusuf who agreed with him.) Furthermore the other problems could be dealt with at any time—but Buraimi was more than a problem: it was the feeling that the dignity of the country had been tampered with and trampled on. So this point must be treated first if the atmosphere was to be cleared. How could other matters be dealt with if their dignity had been injured as it was. It would be of the greatest pleasure to them if no problem existed: but Buraimi was not only a problem or a difference of viewpoints. It had gone deeper, and for that reason they insisted that that question should be settled first. They did not necessarily mean that it would be settled once and for all—but some temporary settlement. This temporary settlement would restore to them their feeling of dignity. Prince Feisal was ready to discuss a kind of restoration of the *status quo*. They were not fanatics about their viewpoint: they were both willing and wished to settle all the problems. They were ready to discuss the most trifling questions with the British side. But first they must wash out this past injury to their dignity. They would welcome *anything* that would show that their dignity was being regained. Then they would entertain the smaller questions. He had confidence in the Ambassador and he had great hopes, God willing, that everything would be settled. But let both sides first improve the atmosphere. He asked the Ambassador to imagine the state of the people if they were told that some questions were being discussed while the main question remained ninth. He hoped that his suggestion about dividing the Buraimi aspect into two parts—first, some return to normal conditions; second, the final solution—would find the Ambassador agreeable.

The Ambassador endorsed wholeheartedly what Prince Feisal had said about agreement being in the interest of both countries. It was a question of mutual benefit. His Government would be very glad to hear of it, and he was sure that they would be the first to endorse it. He was also glad to hear Prince Feisal's remarks that there was no hostility or enmity: he would pass this on. He saw exactly what the Prince meant about having something tangible to show the people that the Government's dignity was being respected. He would have thought that, just as it had helped to relax tension in his own country, so in Saudi Arabia the fact that they were having talks might have had that effect: and they might feel that that fact was an earnest that the British were not trampling the honour of Saudi Arabia in the dust, but were seeking a solution of all the differences between the two countries. In fact, was there any necessity to tell the

the outside world of the order in which the questions were to be discussed? They could keep the talks confidential—he thought this would be a good thing. He would like His Royal Highness's opinion on that.

Prince Feisal agreed that they were not bound to publish anything. But he wished to make two points: first, that the whole people of Saudi Arabia had hoped that after the gesture His Majesty had made in receiving the Ambassador and his credentials the British Government would be able to gratify the country after the insult which had wounded their pride. He just could not have counted the number of people who had come to see him after the Mission of Mr. Dodds-Parker and had asked "have you finished with the British? Have they handed Buraimi back?"; and the second point was that they as negotiators were also from the people and had the same wounded feelings as the people: they also, as Saudis, had that feeling. When he spoke about the people he had not meant that they had different feelings from himself. He had not been thinking of publishing the agenda. But he and his colleagues could not find it possible to discuss matters without first being able to rehabilitate their dignity. Did the Ambassador agree to his suggestion to the effect of dividing Buraimi into two parts—first gratifying the feelings of the Saudi people, and then turning to the solution. Good feeling would be restored with the return to the *status quo*.

The Ambassador said that he was glad Prince Feisal had agreed to keep the order of the agenda confidential.

Prince Feisal interrupted to say that he had meant that there was no need for the man in the street to see the agenda, in that he was not seeing any tangible results.

The Ambassador continued by saying that Prince Feisal had made two points. One that in return for His Majesty's gesture in receiving him there had been popular hope that there would be a return gesture. But, to speak frankly, the gesture had been there—in the person of Mr. Dodds-Parker, a British Minister. His presence had been the result of a decision carefully weighed by the British Government. The gesture had in fact been twofold: the British Government had made one, and so had His Majesty. There had been popular feeling in Saudi Arabia: there had also been popular feeling at home against which background the decision to send Mr. Dodds-Parker to Riyadh had been taken. In short the score was now even. As regards the second point made by His Royal Highness—it was (and the Ambassador accepted it obviously) that public feeling in Saudi Arabia had been wounded, and that His Royal Highness and the Government and particularly the King shared and were one in that feeling. This was the last place in which he wanted to go into past details, but he had to make it clear that again in this matter the account was even. British feelings too had been wounded over the Buraimi incident—they had had great hopes of the Arbitration Agreement—its failure had contributed largely to the present crisis of confidence. If the question of Buraimi was a subject of emotion in Saudi Arabia it was also a subject of emotion both in his country and in Muscat and Abu Dhabi. He did not want to go into past details and he did not want to labour this point—but there was emotional feeling on both sides. He could put His Royal Highness's suggestion to his Government: but the position was that he had set out the British view of the most practical way of leading up to the major problems. His Royal Highness had made another suggestion—a new one. His own suggestion, which at this stage was a purely personal one, would be to make—in typically British fashion—a compromise between these two points of view: between putting the question of Buraimi first or later in the list. If they went through the agenda, as he had in the plane coming there, they would see that items 1 to 6 were outstanding frontier problems, 7 and 8 were general points which it would be very profitable to discuss to clear the atmosphere, 9 concerned Buraimi and 10 was a subject which they had discussed before. He had to reconcile the desire in his own Government to re-create confidence before passing on to major issues and His Royal Highness's viewpoint—which he fully understood. He would be prepared to recommend to his Government that they promote the first part of the Buraimi question, divided as Prince Feisal had suggested, to fifth place. The first four items were, he would have hoped, relatively easy and would help to create an atmosphere in which they might pass on to a number 5 as suggested by Prince Feisal for the first stage. His Royal Highness must accept the Ambassador's word that he was not trying in any way to stall, but to work out a compromise between the two points of view. He asked if Prince Feisal thought his suggestion had any merit.

Prince Feisal said that he did not wish to waste the Ambassador's time. He would speak frankly. The utmost he could do was to make it quite clear that there was no hope of tackling anything unless they created an atmosphere in which the Saudi Arabian Government could carry on with the other questions. What he had suggested was not a method of solving the main problem, but was only a way of restoring the situation. He wished to explain that he and his colleagues were not thinking of bargaining—on the contrary they wished to reach a solution as soon as possible. The suggestion he had made about Buraimi was a spontaneous one (here Khalid and Yusuf nodded agreement). His colleagues too were eager to reach agreement and for this reason did not oppose him in his suggestion.

The Ambassador replied that in making his suggestion he was actuated by exactly similar motives. He had already suggested that the very fact that talks were proceeding and that they were honestly trying to reach a solution of all their difficulties—this surely would assuage the national pride.

Prince Feisal repeated that he did not think there was any point in doing anything unless there was this restoration of the atmosphere—something tangible and concrete.

The Ambassador asked if this meant tangible and concrete in the eyes of the people.

Prince Feisal replied that as members of the Government they wanted to see something done—not necessarily to solve the problem, but to improve the atmosphere. Public opinion was behind them.

The Ambassador asked Prince Feisal to realise that there were two sides to every question. He had tried hard to put the British point of view. He took it then that his suggestion was unacceptable.

Prince Feisal said that he had not yet gone thoroughly into the Ambassador's suggestion because that concerned the talks. His suggestion concerned something preliminary to the talks.

The Ambassador said he hoped he had made this point clear, namely that the fact that they had started talks should be an important step in restoring Saudi confidence.

Prince Feisal emphasised that his own suggestion, like the Ambassador's, was an attempt to find a compromise—their view was that the Buraimi question should be solved first. He had suggested that it should be done in two parts. He would like to make a draft to show what needed to be done now to quieten Saudi national feeling.

The Ambassador said that he could see no objection to this.

Prince Feisal said that he wished to facilitate the matter, to reach something practical.

The Ambassador said that he too might well have some practical suggestions to make in due course. But if His Royal Highness would give him his suggestions he could of course pass them on to the British Government.

It was then agreed to hold a further meeting the next day at 10 or 10.30 a.m.

ES 1051/90

No. 27

COMMENTS ON ANGLO-SAUDI TALKS ON BURAIMI

Mr. Parkes to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received June 21)

(No. 42. Confidential) Jedda,
Sir, June 17, 1956.

In my telegram No. 10 from Riyadh of the 14th of June I offered some preliminary comments on my two days' discussions on the agenda for the Anglo-Saudi talks, a full account of which is given in my immediately preceding despatch. I now have the honour to make some more considered comments on this blatant Saudi move to force an early issue.

2. I was once again struck in this exchange by the genuine Saudi preoccupation with saving King Saud's face. Sovereignty over Buraimi comes second only. At one stage, for example, the Advisers had virtually to intervene to remind Prince Faisal to talk about an eventual settlement. And more than once the Prince indicated that if only we would extricate the King from his prestige crisis he would be perfectly happy to continue substantive discussions with us at leisure.

3. I do not find this emphasis particularly hard to understand. There are excellent reasons why King Saud should be apprehensive of the blow to his prestige dealt by our reoccupation of Buraimi, though these apprehensions have been considerably aggravated by tribal and other demonstrations demanding that this insult to the House of Saud should be avenged by their loyal blood. No doubt Saud himself believes that he is holding back an irate nation. He has certainly sold this idea to my American colleague most successfully.

4. At the same time King Saud knows perfectly well that he cannot challenge us physically; and indeed, as suggested in my despatch No. 35 of the 20th of May, I suspect he would not be entirely averse from reaching some sort of *modus vivendi* with us on straightforward "camel diplomacy" lines. The Buraimi imbroglio, however, stands in his way and on this issue even he must realise by now that we have no intention of yielding. Small wonder that the question remains a fixation with him. The only practical alternative open to him is recourse to the Security Council, and against this he has probably had to set his personal reluctance to step into the expert British pillory which he knows will be awaiting him there, and American advice.

5. In my telegram No. 140 of the 6th May I reported an interview with the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the United Kingdom in which Sheikh Hafiz Wahba seemed peculiarly confident that my talks with Prince Faisal would last until June after which an appeal would be made to the Security Council, probably in July. Sheikh Hafiz added that they (presumably the Advisers) were not alarmed at the prospect of further revelations by us of Saudi methods since so much had come out already without particularly damaging effect.

6. The determination with which Prince Faisal has now presented his unacceptable ultimatum goes to confirm this, and seems to me to indicate a desire to break off the talks on what appear to him the best terms possible, with a view to opening the way to the Security Council roughly in accordance with this time-table. It may be without significance but King Saud apparently mentioned to my American colleague the other day *en passant* that he was prepared to restrain his natural impatience by talking to the British for, say, six weeks. If he saw no daylight by then, he would have to think again. It was six weeks to the day that Mr. Dodds-Parker left Riyadh when I started discussing the agenda with Prince Faisal! If I am right, the Saudis' rather artificial patience over the past six weeks might be expected to win them some sympathy in the Security Council. They took up the British offer to talk but insult was only added to injury. Indeed, had it not been for the tactical blunder of Faisal's hasty ultimatum they might have had some success. Even my American colleague Mr. Wadsworth, when I told him of this latest Saudi move, felt that they had been too hasty and showed his resentment.

7. Mr. Wadsworth has been engaged in his own negotiations—the Dhahran Air Base Agreement—ever since his return from lengthy consultations in Washington on the 23rd of May. Since, in Saudi minds at least, there is a certain correlation between these two sets of negotiations, I think it will be profitable briefly to examine at this point the course of the American talks. Mr. Wadsworth had thought to conclude his

negotiations in a few day but the Saudis are dragging their feet. He is, he tells me, frankly baffled. King Saud hints at outside pressures. When Egypt and Iraq have succeeded in eliminating foreign bases from their soil, and even Jordan has expelled Glubb Pasha, there are difficulties for Saudi Arabia despite her sincere regard for her American friends. At lower levels Mr. Wadsworth is meeting normal horse-trading tactics. The American military mission should be expanded, deliveries of arms should be expedited, more arms should be supplied, more Saudis trained—both in the United States and Saudi Arabia—and so on. The net result is that so far these Saudi-American negotiations have got precisely nowhere. Mr. Wadsworth is not unduly alarmed. Only the State Department, apparently, is anxious to get the renewal agreement signed and delivered. For his part, and so far as he can see the Saudis' too, the negotiations can continue as long as may be needed.

8. The questions of Buraimi and Dhahran are of course not analogous. Buraimi for the Saudis is in essence an internal problem, a problem of prestige at home. The continuance of the American Base at Dhahran, though internally acceptable to the Saudis, is difficult for them to present externally, particularly in the extreme nationalist and neutralist company that they are now keeping. If the Buraimi question was settled satisfactorily for the Saudis tomorrow this would not of itself help the Americans in their negotiations. I think it is important to be very clear on this if later on we should be subjected to American pressure to be more conciliatory to the Saudis. If, however, the Dhahran Air Base Agreement were safely out of the way the Saudis would lose an important trump card to play out to ensure American support over Buraimi, whether the question is before the Security Council or not.

9. In brief, Saudi thinking seems to be as follows. The question of eventual sovereignty apart, some spectacular action over Buraimi is urgently necessary for internal reasons to save the King's face. The only practical means of achieving this is by recourse to the Security Council. Here American support, or at any rate sympathy, is essential. They would not, for instance, like to canvass openly for Russian support. Not to alienate American sympathy the Saudis had to go through the motions of talking to us, though they knew they would get nothing substantial. But these talks

must not be allowed to drag on since the Air Base Agreement cannot be played along indefinitely. It is important therefore to get the Buraimi question to the Security Council *before* Saudi procrastination over Dhahran exasperates the Americans. Having extracted—they doubtless argue—the maximum American support possible in New York by blackmail over the Dhahran Air Base they can then do exactly what they want with it.

10. From what he tells me Mr. Wadsworth appears to have done his best recently to persuade the Saudis to keep our talks going. He himself seems to have accepted our policy of lengthy conversations to rebuild confidence. Indeed he apparently went so far as to suggest to the Saudis that, if they were so keen to discuss Buraimi and we other matters, a possible solution was the formation of sub-committees. One sub-committee, consisting of Prince Faisal and myself, could discuss Buraimi. Another sub-committee, on which, say, Sheikh Yusuf Yasin could sit, could discuss the other items on the agenda. To the Saudis he hinted that if they wished to press on with the Buraimi sub-committee and soft-pedal on the other it was open to them. To me, he said, he would have advised the reverse. The great thing, in his view, was to keep the talks going at all costs. He was seriously annoyed, therefore, that in his recent discussions with me Prince Faisal had never even mooted such a compromise solution.

11. Mr. Wadsworth's reaction is satisfactory so far as it goes. Other members of the American Embassy here, for what this is worth, consider that the Saudis have behaved badly in posing impossible conditions virtually before our talks have started. If, as I fancy, the Saudis are looking for a pretext to break off the talks and go to the Security Council, doing their utmost to shift the blame on to British intransigence, is this such a very bad thing? At this stage the balance of reasonableness seems clearly to be in our favour.

12. The immediate problem is what to do next. As seen from here I am inclined to recommend that we return no answer to Prince Faisal's ultimatum, however personally embarrassing this may be to me in Jeddah. Our silence will infuriate the Saudis and an opponent who has lost his temper is always at a disadvantage. It will enable us to avoid the odium of turning down Faisal's proposals, though our failure to answer such unreasonable

demands can be tellingly justified afterwards in New York. It should also avoid a subsequent Saudi counter-proposal, as a result of possible American pressure, for parallel sub-committees or the like which I think we should find embarrassing.

13. If, however, it is judged inexpedient not to reply, then I would suggest that I be instructed to inform Prince Faisal that his ultimatum is unreasonable, unacceptable and raises issues (*i.e.*, pre-conditions) that were not even mentioned when we agreed to enter into these negotiations. But that I am now authorised to confirm and offer officially my personal suggestion that the

Buraimi item should be taken fifth and not ninth on the agenda. I should presumably avoid any further discussion, and it would be as well to leave him a carefully drafted aide-memoire.

14. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Washington, the Political Resident at Bahrain, the United Kingdom Delegation at New York and the Political Officer with the Middle East Forces at Nicosia.

I have, &c.

R. W. PARKES.

ES 1015/19

No. 28

KING SAUD'S ADVISERS

Mr. Parkes to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received July 20)(No. 52. Confidential)
Sir,Jedda,
July 15, 1956.

In paragraph 11 (f) of my despatch No. 35 of May 20 I referred to the desirability of removing the pernicious foreign counsellors by whom King Saud is surrounded. A supplementary analysis of their position and influence may not be unhelpful.

2. The governmental structure of this country is an anachronism and Saudi Arabia, with the Yemen, must be a source of some embarrassment to the naive but progressive Bandung associates of these two feudal backwaters. Democracy, save for that endemic in the old tribal society on which the twentieth century is steadily encroaching, is non-existent. The Saudi system is at best a benevolent autocracy on patriarchal lines; but this description should not be allowed to conjure up any rose-coloured mirages of a more leisurely, less complicated past. A body known as the Consultative Assembly, set up in the Hejaz when Saudi rule sat uneasily there, still exists. Such powers, however, as it may ever have possessed have since declined. The country is now in theory one and Prince Feisal no longer has the title or responsibilities of Viceroy of the Hejaz. The Assembly is occasionally consulted, rather as an afterthought, on some non-Sharia issues but has no power to initiate or block legislation, lawmaking being the preserve of the Council of Ministers and the King.

3. Outlying provinces are ruled by Amirs or Governors on whom the King can implicitly rely, drawn in the main from the Sidayri, Jiluwi and Mazi families of the Nejd. Some instructions presumably reach them from the various Ministries, and their expenditure is controlled fairly closely by the Minister of Finance. But for the most part they are directed by the Diwan al Maliki or Royal Secretariat.

4. The Council of Ministers is headed by Prince Feisal as President and packed with as many of the King's brothers as are competent to hold even nominal ministerial office. Few of these princelings take any active interest in their Ministries, which are in the main run by mildly incompetent deputies. Mr. St. John Philby is of opinion that even Prince Feisal is now largely a figurehead; but although the latter's boredom, discouragement and ill health are evident, and he is obviously unwilling to discuss any serious question without at least one Royal Adviser to hold his hand, I would not go as far as this myself. Some of the more technical Ministries are held by commoners of whom Mohammed Surour, the Finance Minister, is far and away the most influential. It is probably true to say that, provided the King's personal demands for money are met promptly and without question, Mohammed Surour is able to do more or less what he likes with the public section of the residue. The staff of all these Ministries is composed of comparatively ill-educated Saudis, stiffened by frustrated foreign experts and Arab importees on the make.

5. The Royal Secretariat is nominally in charge of the King's eldest son, Prince Fahd bin Saud, aged 31. In practice it is run, not altogether inefficiently, by a 66-year-old Palestinian, Rushdi Malhas, who has held this office for 20 years. This man, despite being an official adviser of the King and a member of the Council of Ministers in his own right, is a pure technician who carries out, but does not initiate or influence, the King's orders. In addition two of the five surviving brothers of the late King Ibn Saud hold positions of influence in the country. Prince Abdullah Ibn Abdur Rahman, aged 56 and King Saud's senior by two years, is Chief Adviser and has a powerful influence over policy making. Prince Musaid is Head of the Complaints Bureau of the Council of Ministers, 34 years of age and said to be reasonably efficient.

6. So far then the picture is reasonably clear. An absolute King ruling, through a Council of Ministers composed largely of his brothers, a country administered by unquestionably loyal Nejd Governors, in most cases drawn from

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families intermarried with the House of Saud. If, as his devoted but outspoken Ambassador to the United Kingdom, Sheikh Hafiz Wahba, maintains, King Saud, the pinnacle of this clannish pyramid, "has a very little brain," the power of the Advisers who inspire this modest cerebration must obviously be considerable. Who and what are these Royal counsellors?

7. It has apparently been the custom over the years for distressed or exiled Muslims of all races to take refuge in Saudi Arabia. If Ibn Saud was a conscientious protector of the Holy Places he was also a consistent protector of the most unholy politicians. No prophet temporarily without honour in his own country appears to have appealed to his generosity in vain, and the pattern seems to have grown up of giving these expatriates, if of sufficient importance, an allowance, a house, and the title of Adviser—more or less automatically. Thus, at the beginning of King Saud's reign in November 1953, in addition to the faithful Yusuf Yasin (Syrian) and Khalid Abu Walid Qarqani (Libyan), his "Advisers" comprised the notorious Rashid Ali Jailani (Iraqi), Bashir Sadawi (Syrian with Libyan connexions), Jamal Hussein (Palestinian) and an ex-President of the Syrian Republic, General Fawzi Silo. Yet another Syrian ex-Head of State, Colonel Adib Shishakly, joined this not unhappy band of exiles in 1955.

8. Some of these "Advisers" have not stayed the course. Rashid Ali and Bashir Sadawi are now in Cairo. Fawzi Silo, though nominally Military Adviser to the King, lives obscurely in a Jedda bungalow; and Shishakly is now living equally obscurely at the opposite pole in Dammam. The hard core of effective Advisers thus comprises—in a tentative order of their importance—the King's uncle, Prince Abdullah, Jamal Hussein, Yusuf Yasin and Khalid Abu Walid.

9. Jamal Hussein is a relatively new arrival, having forsaken the unprofitable "Gaza Government" for a life of ease in Riyadh six years ago only. A bitter Arab nationalist, of less calibre than his better known relative, Haj Amin Hussein, ex-Mufti of Jerusalem, he cut little ice with Ibn Saud who was too realistic to worry overmuch over the relatively remote Palestine question. Jamal accordingly fastened on Saud, then Crown Prince, and his foresight has been amply rewarded. It is said that Saud does nothing now without first consulting him, and the King's fanatical hatred of Israel undoubtedly stems from this source. At 65 Jamal Hussein looks like a benevolent, if rather shambling, Father Christmas; but possesses a good brain and does a fair amount of odd jobs for his Royal Master.

10. The guiding principles of Sheikh Yusuf Yasin are money and xenophobia, in that order. After more than 30 years in this country he openly claims to be the second richest man in Syria; and his hatred of foreigners—and foreign capital—is notorious. Although he has made numerous enemies, notably the Finance and Commerce Ministers, there is no sign to-day that his influence with the King is in any way impaired, and the latter's dependence on him in foreign affairs regrettably continues. At 66 Sheikh Yusuf looks 10 years younger. This, however, is largely due to the tinting skill of his barber and he is known to be in poor health.

11. Khalid Abu Walid was a considerable favourite of the late King and continues to be a respected friend of the family. He is, however, steadily losing ground both politically and physically, and being over 70 is considerably less active than his colleagues. Abdur Rahman Azzam is married to Khalid's daughter, which probably accounts for his present position as Saudi Agent at the United Nations and general emissary. Neither Azzam, nor his fellow Egyptian, Abdul Moneim Mustafa, an Assistant Secretary-General of the Arab League and Saudi legal adviser, have so far anything like the status or the influence of an Adviser.

12. It would be appropriate to end this analysis of the real power behind the Saudi throne with some suggestions for its reduction. Certainly, whilst the Advisers remain, the King's extravagance will be unchecked, his conceit encouraged, his thinking conditioned by extreme nationalist reflexes and his probably genuine concern for the country's welfare diverted into costly foreign ventures. But whilst our relations remain strained, and Saudi Arabia continues virtually to be an Egyptian satellite, it is hard to say what action to recommend. Prince Abdullah and Jamal Hussein, though both strongly nationalist, and, I think, anti-British, are probably less evil in themselves than Yusuf Yasin, who is also a good deal more vulnerable. Indeed, if a suitable medium could only be found, it might perhaps be possible to make some constructive use of Prince Abdullah.

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13. Sheikh Yusuf is thus the obvious target, his money-making and systematic export to Syria of good Saudi riyals lending themselves readily to propaganda exploitation. His known hostility to foreign capital can scarcely commend him to Aramco, and *ipso facto* Washington, though whether the Americans would, or could, help here is doubtful. It might, however, be possible to set Prince Abdullah, who has a keen sense of property, against Sheikh Yusuf. The former was responsible for the 1955 edict which prohibited the export of capital from the country and ordered the return of all Saudi money invested abroad. Sheikh Yusuf has all too obviously ignored this. It would also probably be worth quietly to encourage the hostility of the Finance and Commerce Ministers, Mohammed Surour and Mohammed Abdullah Ali Reza. We could take no overt part in this ourselves but some action might be possible through friendly colleagues: the Pakistan Ambassador, for example, is fairly close to Mohammed Surour.

14. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Governor of Aden, the Acting Political Resident at Bahrain, Her Majesty's Ambassador at Washington, the Political Representative with the Middle East Forces and the Regional Information Officer at Beirut.

I have, &c.

R. W. PARKES.

ES 1531/25

No. 29

POSITION AND INFLUENCE OF ARAMCO

Mr. Parkes to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received July 20)

(No. 53. Confidential)
Sir,

Jedda,
July 15, 1956.

In paragraph 11 of my despatch No. 35 of the 20th of May I listed a number of points which I consider relevant to our policy towards Saudi Arabia. One of these, item (f), concerned the Arabian-American Oil Company (ARAMCO), and I gave it as my opinion that the influence of this organisation was far and away the most undesirable of all those to which King Saud is subjected. In this despatch I propose to enlarge upon this statement, and at the same time offer some comments on the position of ARAMCO in this country.

2. ARAMCO payments to the Government are virtually the sole basis of the Saudi economy. Even if it were possible, which it is not, to diversify this economy in any way there is little incentive to do so when an increasing world demand for oil and oil products is assured, and when it has been proved that ARAMCO's rate of production can keep pace with an expanding market. Middle East oil reserves are now the largest in the world: Saudi reserves are the largest in the Middle East: it is as simple as that. Throughout this year production has been running at an average daily rate of over 1 million barrels. Next year the northern group of wells at Safaniyah will be brought in, thereby increasing production—and Saudi oil revenue—by about one-fifth. Thereafter the increase is expected to be at least proportionate to the increase in world oil consumption.

3. If the Saudi Arabian Government were satisfied at this steady and formidable increase in their revenues one might reasonably expect future relations between oil company and Government to be free from stress. There are plenty of signs, however, that the Saudis will not remain satisfied. The stability of their feudal society demands frequent and increasingly large injections of money. Furthermore the régime is embarked on a spending spree which it cannot easily curb. The demand is thus likely to be for more, much more, money. From where could this be expected to come?

4. Marketing considerations do not allow of any stepping up of the normal rate of increase in production. Extra money can therefore only be extracted within the framework of existing production programmes. One method would be to revise the present 50-50 division of profits, which *a priori* would appear to constitute an irresistible temptation for the Saudi Government. It has been said that ARAMCO could afford to operate on an 80-20 basis and still show a reasonable dividend to their shareholders. Why then are the Saudis not already nibbling at this superfluous 30 per cent. profit with which the company at present appear to be getting away? I think it is because even they realise that the time is not yet ripe: memories of Abadan are still vivid and the 50-50 arrangement has acquired for itself something of the force of a moral law. I was accordingly not surprised to hear the other day from an ARAMCO official that very recently, in connexion with some other and minor negotiations, the Saudi Arabian Government had reaffirmed their intention of abiding by the 50-50 agreement.

5. The feeling in ARAMCO is that "any needling will have to be on the perimeter." Two sections of this perimeter are under examination at the moment. The first concerns the transport by tanker of oil from Saudi Arabia, the legal rights of which are now being fought out at Geneva between Mr. Onassis and the Saudi Arabian Government on the one hand and the hard-pressed oil company on the other. The second involves the exploitation of the natural gas which at present ARAMCO either burns or pumps back into the wells. A third section of the perimeter currently in the news, but not yet being actively "needled," is ARAMCO's subsidiary Tapline. There are other, more complicated, arrangements which the Saudis will doubtless test for their money-bearing possibilities. Some are mentioned in your telegram No. 3187 of the 12th of July to Washington, and the words used there of ARAMCO—"a complete surrender to Saudi demands"—provide a timely text for this despatch.

6. I have not so far mentioned the other method of increasing their revenues which the Saudis have adopted, namely borrowing from New York banks. It seems

to have been now established that money so advanced merely represents a short-circuiting of normal ARAMCO payments. Loans are certified by ARAMCO on the basis of what would be owing to the Saudi Government if, on the day the loan is made, all operations were to cease and all installations were written off. In other words no money is advanced which does not represent profits on oil already marketed. At best, therefore, this method is only a temporary expedient for the Saudi Arabian Government, the scope of which cannot be significantly extended. It does not consequently alter my basic contention that Saudi cupidity must be expected to continue to exert pressure over ARAMCO.

7. To what extent will ARAMCO give in? In past negotiations they have shown themselves markedly compliant and, as we all know, the political consequences of this subservience have been far-reaching. ARAMCO habitually excuse themselves by pointing to the tiresome idiosyncrasies of the people with whom they have to deal. This is true enough in all conscience and we should make allowance for it. There are, however, other explanations of ARAMCO's past behaviour which are equally valid. Saudi Arabian oil must be one of the most profitable commodities in the world, and in the cut-throat field of oil extraction ARAMCO must have been continually conscious that there were many rivals ready to take on the Saudi Arabian oil industry on more competitive terms. This consideration, however, has already lost some of its validity since, as I shall explain later, there are now ample indications that ARAMCO, or any other company that might take its place, will be sorely tried if present trends continue. In my judgment ARAMCO are likely to continue their policy of compliance, not so much from fear now of competition from other companies, as with a cold and calculating eye on the eventual day of reckoning. Their aim will be to get what they can out of the country before they are forced out. They will be prepared, I imagine, to put up a mild rearguard action in the process against the encroaching claims of the Government; but they will be disinclined to risk a pitched battle because they fear they will be the losers.

8. If it were only ARAMCO's future that was liable to be affected by any policy they may subsequently adopt towards the Saudi Arabian Government there would be less to worry about. ARAMCO's behaviour, however, has had, and can continue to have, undesirable political repercussions. It is not so much that their influence on King Saud has been *positively* harmful: their sins have been, and are, those of omission. I would not, for instance, equate ARAMCO's chief executives with advisers such as Jamal Hussein or Yusuf Yasin, who are in constant attendance on the King and not just occasional visitors to Riyadh from Dhahran or New York. Nor do I think that the King ever seeks advice from ARAMCO on political, or indeed economic, problems. The relationship is much more that of master and servant. A particular proposition—it may concern the building of a railway or some irredentist campaign against British influence in the peninsula—is thought up by the Royal counsellors and passed by the King. ARAMCO is then asked to provide technical experts and services; possibly to advise on details but not, I believe, on the general policy itself. ARAMCO in short fulfil the functions of a modern, white, secretariat for the Saudi Government; and with their immensely efficient techniques help to maintain the Saudi illusion that theirs is a modern State.

9. Some of the tasks ARAMCO have so readily carried out for their Saudi masters have been motivated by self-interest rather than a desire to be generally ingratiating. There has been much talk about Saudi Arabia's having "enough" oil. But for the stockholders and directors of ARAMCO, as for the Saud family themselves, there can never be enough. Hence ARAMCO have a direct interest in Saudi claim-jumping in the peninsula. I am inclined to think, however, for reasons given later in the despatch, that ARAMCO's top policy-makers may be less ready in future to applaud such tactics. They cannot cease to pay lip-service to them, since to do so would mark too blatant a departure from their former compliance. Thus the combined resources of George Rentz, ARAMCO lawyers and the Arabian Research Division at Damman will doubtless continue to be made available to stiffen and rationalise Saudi frontier claims. But I suspect that ARAMCO might now be prepared to take a firmer line with the Saudis, provided they were given some official encouragement and did not feel they were going it alone.

10. ARAMCO's condonation of King Saud's policies in the past has, in my view, done disproportionate harm. Like most Arabs I imagine that the King has an underlying faith in the directness of both British and Americans. He expects straight speaking and honest advice from them. The Arabs at his court are of

course more sympathetic; but if ever he has doubts about the correctness of his policies—and some I believe are faintly forming in his "little mind"—he will not look for confirmation to partial Arab courtiers. He has, however, an independent touchstone in the shape of a body of shrewd, Western business men, on terms with the modern world and modern diplomacy. His use of this touchstone may be largely unconscious but it is there just the same. If, therefore, ARAMCO never gainsay his policies, if they subscribe to peculiar Saudi theories of Zakkat, the Imamate of Oman and so on without a word, then surely those policies must be just and well-founded. Surely he has right (the pragmatic right of Western politics) on his side. It is this, I firmly believe, which has had so undesirable an effect on the King's evolution and is the most sinister consequence of ARAMCO's subservience. The failure of white men, and Americans at that, to speak out like men.

11. So far I have only examined relations between ARAMCO, King and Government. To complete the picture of ARAMCO's position in Saudi Arabia I shall now deal with ARAMCO's role in the social structure of this country.

12. In my Chancery letter 1013/15/56⁽¹⁾ of the 25th of June and my despatch No. 44⁽¹⁾ of the 25th of June I reported on the recent outcrop of ARAMCO labour troubles, and the measures taken by the Saudi Government to quell them. The situation is reportedly now back to normal. Absenteeism among the workers has returned to the standard figure of 5 per cent., and in some places is even below this. Both ARAMCO and the Government seem satisfied that the trouble is over. Nevertheless, comparatively slight though it was, it served to highlight the focal position of the oil company and the immense task it has in maintaining a balance between labour on the one hand and the Government on the other. Labour unrest is plainly going to grow, and as it progresses the oil company will be forced closer and closer to the Government. This is happening already. Where formerly ARAMCO could boast of their liberal labour policies, and dream of the day when the people of Saudi Arabia would speak of "our oil company," they now present the appearance, in popular estimation at any rate, of being teamed up with the régime and against the progressives.

13. The implications of this are serious. Vicious Saudi absolutism makes it difficult and dangerous to oppose the Government openly. Progressive elements—and these are mainly to be found among the white-collar staff of ARAMCO—must thus raise trouble for the régime through ARAMCO. This is generally judged to have been the motive behind the recent bout of labour troubles; for, in themselves, ARAMCO's labour policies are wise and benevolent as is shown by the essentially trivial nature of the workers' recent complaints. In short the trouble of the past six months has been political—not economic—in nature; and this will probably be the pattern in future.

14. ARAMCO are naturally aware of the dangers of the situation and have already taken steps to postpone in some way the eventual explosion. In talks with Jamal Hussein, one of the King's chief advisers, they suggested the establishment of a Ministry of Labour, with an outside expert, Arab or at least Muslim, brought in to advise. They emphasised the interdependence of labour and warned the Government that what ARAMCO concede to-day may be forced upon other employers of labour tomorrow. They even went so far as to invite two or three of the bigger contractors to Dhahran to discuss a common labour policy. All this is commendable, but it also lends colour to the popular view that the Saudi Arabian Government, and the country's vested interests (of which ARAMCO is of course one), are trying to hold the ring against the wage earners. The employers will concede what *they* have to (just as ARAMCO concede what *they* have to in their financial negotiations with the Government); but they will maintain as long as possible the feudal form of Saudi Arabian society. Despite talk of a Ministry of Labour the fact remains that the Government has just issued a particularly repressive Labour Decree (see my despatch quoted above). It is significant that, whilst approving ARAMCO's suggestion of a Labour Ministry, Jamal Hussein said in the same breath that there must never be any such organisation as a trade union in Saudi Arabia.

15. If all this seems reactionary inside Saudi Arabia, what is its appearance outside, in the context of developments in the Middle East as a whole? The Arab League's interest in Middle East oil industries is already worrying the Saudis and to his general distrust of Colonel Nasser's expansionist policies King Saud must

⁽¹⁾ Not printed.

now presumably add a fear of Nasser's oil policies. The basic Middle East oil division between have-nots and haves is plainly going to make itself increasingly felt as the wealth of the haves grows. This in itself should tend to divert King Saud away from the camp of his have-not allies, and is perhaps the greatest single inducement the West have in separating him from Nasser. How can the road back to the West be made more easy and attractive? One way that suggests itself is by working upon ARAMCO.

16. Before presenting my conclusions I may perhaps summarise the broad lines of my argument so far. ARAMCO are now definitely worried. Having been forced to adopt a common front with the reactionary element in the country, and conscious of the immense force and attraction of Nasser's appeal outside it, they cannot but be apprehensive lest their time in Saudi Arabia may be limited. They therefore probably intend to get as much out of the country's oil industry as they can while they can. To postpone the evil day as long as possible they will continue to be accommodating to the Government, making small and half-hearted stands only where they can hope to save a few dollars from the ever-increasing amount they are obliged to pour down the bottomless Saudi coffers. King Saud will thus be encouraged in his political follies, and denied the very thing of which he stands in most need—good advice. The writing on the wall becomes clearer every day: unless Saudi policies show a radical change social and other forces in Saudi Arabia will eventually sweep the country: Nasser may even follow Mohamad Ali—in 20th century guise: in any case sooner or later—and quite possibly sooner—the Saudi régime and the Arabian American Oil Company will together pass into history. ARAMCO would then have accepted what they probably now regard as inevitable, and will presumably tot up philosophically their overall profits and losses.

17. Would not a possible alternative to this Cassandra-like prophecy be to seize now the opportunity which the present state of the oil industry in the Middle East appears to offer? However isolationist and cagy individual Middle East oil companies may have been in the past the tendency nowadays is surely towards co-operation. They are all in it together, and current I.P.C. and Tapline difficulties in making pipeline transit arrangements point the moral. No Middle East oil company can, for example, view with equanimity the prospect of Colonel Nasser as President of an Arab Middle East (Oil) Federation; and current political manoeuvres in the have-not capitals of Cairo and Damascus seem to point clearly in this direction. Ample reason would thus appear to exist not only for greater co-operation and solidarity between Middle East oil companies, but also for Great Britain, America and other interested Western countries to urge this course upon them. Formidable obstacles would, of course, have to be surmounted before such a policy could reach a successful conclusion, not the least of them being the United States anti-trust laws. I cannot naturally estimate what chances we might have of persuading the Americans, in the interests of our joint Middle Eastern policies, to introduce some flexibility into this particular piece of legislation; but obviously very much depends on success here.

18. If, in this way, ARAMCO were assured of a measure of solidarity with other oil companies in the Middle East, they might be prepared, as part of the common task, to adopt a firmer attitude in Saudi Arabia. They might be persuaded that it was in their own ultimate interest to support, or even initiate, straight speaking to King Saud—designed to help him to see that his best interests too lie outside the Nasser camp. ARAMCO might thus ultimately discharge a Western duty which they, and I fear Washington, have conspicuously shunned in the past, and seek to advise the King rather better than he is at present on the spending of Saudi Arabia's revenues and the development of this misguided country.

19. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Washington, the Acting Political Resident in the Persian Gulf at Bahrain, the Political Representative with the Middle East Forces at Nicosia and to the Governor of Aden.

I have, &c.

R. W. PARKES.

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ES 1051/128

No. 30

ANGLO-SAUDI NEGOTIATIONS

Exchange of Correspondence between Her Majesty's Ambassador at Jedda and Prince Feisal

(1)

Enclosure to Jedda P/L Despatch No. 55 of August 9, 1956. (Received August 16)

*British Embassy, Jedda,
July 29, 1956.*

I have been instructed by Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to inform your Royal Highness that he has considered the four-point proposal which was presented to me in Riyadh on June 13. He has also had a number of useful exchanges of views with Dr. Abdur Rahman Azzam. The Secretary of State remains convinced that His Majesty King Saud is as anxious as the British Government to find some way to solve this dispute. Unfortunately the four points, though obviously attractive from the Saudi point of view would represent a complete surrender on the part of the Sultan of Muscat and Oman and the Ruler of Abu Dhabi. Moreover, public opinion in the United Kingdom would not permit Her Majesty's Government to have any part in such an arrangement.

However, the Secretary of State still does not despair of finding a way out by patient discussion. To promote this he is willing that Buraimi should be discussed rather earlier in the list than previously proposed. Moreover, when the item is reached, he would try to persuade the Sultan to agree to repatriate as many as possible of the Buraimi exiles and the restoration of their property. This would in part meet the second of your Royal Highness's points.

With regard to the general question of the ordering of items on the agenda, I have been asked to remind your Royal Highness that putting a subject in a certain place on an agenda does not mean that it must be settled before subsequent items can even be discussed. A matter can be discussed and left for further examination while the next item is taken.

The Secretary of State would also be willing to consider some arrangement whereby Saudi Arabia might have the privilege of access to the sea east of Qatar. It was on this point that the negotiations broke down in 1935. The two sides might well re-examine the causes of that breakdown.

I am instructed to suggest to your Royal Highness that we might now enter into negotiations on the above lines.

Please accept, your Royal Highness, the assurance of my highest consideration.

ES 1051/136

(2)

Enclosure to Jedda P/L Despatch No. 61 of September 2, 1956. (Received September 5)

(Translation)

Your Excellency

I have the honour to inform your Excellency that I have received your letter 1043/56 of the 29th of July, 1956, in which you told me of the views of His Excellency the British Foreign Secretary on the four proposals which I presented to you at our last meeting in Riyadh on the 13th of July, 1956. I should like to state in what follows the impressions which your letter gave His Majesty's Government.

1. We are in agreement with His Excellency the British Foreign Secretary when he says that he is still convinced of His Majesty's desire to find a way of solving the problem of Buraimi and the areas in dispute. There is no necessity for this desire to be once more reaffirmed. It is enough to recall that His Majesty and his

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Government, in their eagerness to get over every difficulty in the way of reaching a satisfactory and just solution to this problem and in order to create a suitable atmosphere for this end, have not limited themselves only to hopes and wishes, but have made considerable efforts proving their good intentions and the sincerity of their wishes. His Majesty's Government hope that the British Government will show a similar determination.

2. His Majesty's Government have learned with no little regret of the British Government's rejection of the four proposals which I presented. They believe that the reason for this refusal may have been because the proposals were not sufficiently detailed.

(a) Your Excellency's letter says that His Excellency the Foreign Secretary considers that the acceptance of these proposals would be a complete surrender on the part of the Sultan of Muscat and the Ruler of Abu Dhabi. This supposition is not based on any proof and is very far from the intention of these proposals and their objective. Accepted arrangements and regulations formerly existed in Buraimi and the disputed areas. No authorities in those areas other than the Saudi authorities had any share in the administration or were present in the area before the British Government's interference in April 1952 and the dispute they raised. After disputes and differences the two parties undertook by means of the Arbitration Agreement to establish a temporary régime for the administration of the areas under arbitration, and to make no alteration in this régime until the Arbitration Tribunal issued its resolution. The advantage of such a provision, which had several international precedents, was to freeze the situation so that there would be neither advantage nor disadvantage for either of the parties in the dispute relative to their legal position during arbitration. However, the arbitration proceedings were unilaterally broken off. In the areas under arbitration measures were taken by one party which gave this party a position prejudicial to the Saudi side. The four proposals aim at making a temporary arrangement for the administration of these territories by their peoples and controlled by neutral States. Though such an arrangement would put Saudi Arabia in a less advantageous position than it used to have, it was nevertheless proposed in order to prove Saudi Arabia's desire to find an impartial solution to this question. It is to be understood that such a temporary arrangement would not in any case affect the solution of the main dispute which would be reached by negotiations between the two sides. Moreover, the implementation of such an arrangement would have an intangible effect in lessening the tensions in the atmosphere which, while the present situation in those areas continues, no doubt overshadows current negotiations.

(b) The second reason for the refusal was that public opinion in Britain would not allow the Government to participate in any way in the proposed arrangements. His Majesty's Government would like to point out that public opinion is formed by such correct information and facts as are supplied. So long as this information is true and impartial the picture formed in public opinion will be correct and near to the truth. In this matter the Saudi Arabian Government naturally cannot be responsible for the results of a situation from whose creation they were far removed. The British Government does not lack the means to enlighten public opinion in their country so that they may now be shown the truth after being misled and given a wrong picture of the situation—a state of affairs which had nothing to do with the Saudi Arabian Government.

3. The Saudi Arabian Government learn that his Excellency the Foreign Secretary hopes that by patient and tolerant discussion a solution of the Buraimi problem will be found. For this purpose his Excellency has shown that he is prepared to have this question discussed at an earlier stage than was intended, and that he is prepared, when this question is discussed, to use his good offices with the Sultan in order to obtain his consent to the return of as many as possible of the deportees to Buraimi and the restoration of their property. His Excellency adds that this would fulfil the second of the Saudi proposals. His Majesty's Government also is hopeful of reaching a satisfactory solution to the Buraimi question. Their present attitude is inspired by this feeling and because they are convinced that by finding a satisfactory and just solution to this question there would be a strengthening of relations between the two countries which would contribute to the peace and resettlement of this part of the world. They note, however, that this part of your Excellency's letter appears to suggest that the Saudi Arabian Government are concerned over the ordering of questions on the agenda proposed by the British side. The fact is that the Saudi side did not raise the matter of the order of

the agenda, but only raised the questions there listed. The question of order was accidentally brought up because Buraimi was involved. Their opinion has been, and still is, that the main question is Buraimi and that it should be discussed and solved. Other than the question of Buraimi and the disputed areas there is no fundamental question between the British and Saudi Arabian Governments. Other questions may be discussed and solved by ordinary diplomatic means. In order to give more proof of their sincere desire to proceed with the discussions they offered their four proposals and stated that, if they were to be accepted, then there would be no objection to discuss the fundamentals of the case at a time agreed upon by the two parties. With regard to his Excellency the Foreign Secretary's promise to use his good offices for the return of the largest number of deportees and the restoration of their property, His Majesty's Government realise that thinking of such a promise proves that his Excellency is convinced of the fairness of this request and is a sign of his good intentions. They would like to point out, however, that they have not presented this as a separate and independent request, but only within the framework of their proposals for a temporary arrangement for the administration of the area. It should therefore be considered within that framework, and borne in mind that these deportees are reluctant to return under an allegiance which differs from their traditional allegiance.

4. The part of your Excellency's letter about the order of questions on the agenda suggests that the British Government wish to make some sort of relation between the different questions offered for discussion. The Saudi Arabian Government affirm that the simplest way of reaching a suitable solution to every question is to have it discussed in its essential nature without linking it to other questions unless there be an unbreakable connexion between them.

5. Your Excellency's letter states that His Excellency the Foreign Secretary is prepared to take the necessary steps to give Saudi Arabia an outlet to the sea east of Qatar; that this question was the point at which the 1935 negotiations broke down; and that the two sides might study the reasons for that breakdown. His Majesty's Government welcome the British Government's realisation of Saudi Arabia's need for an outlet to the sea east of Qatar, but bear in mind that the problem is not concerned with such an outlet alone but with Buraimi and the disputed areas as a whole.

6. Your Excellency said at the end of your letter that discussions could be commenced on the basis of that letter.

7. His Majesty's Government are convinced that the strengthening of relations between the two countries and their establishment on a sound basis should not be handicapped in any way. They believe that the great objective of our present discussions is too precious to be jeopardised by formal considerations. They therefore hope that His Excellency the Foreign Secretary will understand the true aims of the Saudi proposals, that he will be convinced of their reliability and of the need to accept them. If, for reasons on the part of the British Government this is impossible, the Saudi Arabian Government intend to revert to their original standpoint, namely to begin immediately with discussion of the question of Buraimi and the disputed areas in order to reach a suitable and just solution.

8. I would like to point out the importance of the time factor in this matter. It is in the interests of both sides to proceed without delay. When His Majesty's Government agreed to enter into direct negotiations while at the same time maintaining the existence of the Arbitration Agreement and its binding effect, they wanted to omit to explore no avenue which might lead to a solution to this question. While maintaining this agreement they hope that these negotiations may succeed so that a new era is begun in the relations between the two countries.

9. While waiting to know the views of His Excellency the Foreign Secretary I take this opportunity to renew to your Excellency the assurance of my highest consideration.

Signed FEISAL.

ES 10399/2

No. 31

SAUDI-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

Mr. Parkes to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received August 16)(No. 54. Confidential) *Jedda, August 9, 1956.*
Sir,

In recent correspondence which has passed between the United Kingdom High Commission in Karachi and the Commonwealth Relations Office I have noticed some uneasiness over Pakistan's Middle East policy generally, and her attitude towards the Bagdad Pact in particular, together with a disposition to question Pakistan's claim to be able to influence Saudi Arabia. I now have the honour to offer some comments in this regard, with special reference to the recent visit to this country as pilgrims of the Pakistan Prime Minister, Chaudhri Mohamad Ali, and the Pakistan Chief of General Staff, Major-General Nawabzada Sher Ali Khan.

2. The Western Approaches to the sub-continent were of considerable importance to undivided India. The Government of India was thus responsible, until 1936, for the administration of Aden and the Hadhramaut; and until 1947 for the staffing of diplomatic, consular and political posts in Afghanistan, East and South-West Persia and the Persian Gulf. After partition, although this portion of the Government of India's mantle did not fall on Pakistan, her practical interest in the area remained. Her hands, however, in the chaotic early years which succeeded 1947, were full to overflowing. Her relations with the United Kingdom were close, and her expectation of tangible British support over Kashmir sanguine. Pakistan was thus, I imagine, content for Britain to retain her customary wardenship of the Western Marches, in the confident belief that the interests of the two countries in this region were for all practical purposes identical.

3. But, as chaos yielded to some sort of order, disillusionment grew. It became obvious that the United Kingdom was unwilling to intervene between two Commonwealth nations in the domestic issues of Kashmir and the Indus waters, whatever the merits of either case. At the same time India, with incomparably superior reserves of manpower on which to draw, began to make a considerable diplomatic effort in Indonesia, Afghanistan,

Iran and the Arab States. The reason for this deployment is obvious. Apart from his desire to cut an international figure, Pandit Nehru is obsessed with the fear of Islamic encirclement. Ever conscious of his 40 million Muslim minority he has leant over backwards to establish friendly relations with neighbouring Muslim countries, and thus break through this theocratic circle wherever possible. Arab nationalism, Bandung neutralism and a plentiful supply of well-educated and sophisticated Muslim diplomats have alike contributed to his success; and for a time it looked, ironically enough, as if Muslim Pakistan, rather than Hindu India, was the nation to be encircled.

4. Pakistan has, I think, long been conscious of this manoeuvre, in the countering of which untrained and ineffectual diplomatic representation has been a severe hindrance. An early rivalry developed with Egypt, Afghan irredentism reared its ugly head and President Soekarno's secular Republic, with its dynamic neutralism and peculiar Javanese *mystique*, was far from alien to Hinduism. Small wonder then that Pakistan embraced the Bagdad Pact and the South-East Asia Treaty Organisation with enthusiasm: they represented lifelines in a troubled sea to which self-interest and conviction alike compelled her. As I see it, we have been in some danger since 1947 of taking Pakistan too much for granted: of pursuing the inviting shadow of Indian friendship to the growing detriment of Pakistan's substantial loyalty. On numerous occasions since partition India, motivated entirely by self-interest, has followed unfamiliar paths in what—to us—may have seemed dangerous directions. Almost automatically Pakistan has taken the opposite, and safer, forks. But no one relishes being taken for granted; and we have perhaps tended insufficiently to emphasise our satisfaction over Pakistan's correct reactions.

5. The Hindu mind is subtle and tortuous, that of the Pakistani relatively simple and direct. My Pakistani friends admit—all too frankly perhaps—that they did not join the Bagdad Pact out of altruism (any

more, they add, than we did). But within the limits imposed by a state of alert on the North-West frontier and in Kashmir they maintain their readiness to contribute all they can. Where they differ from us, they say, is in our mutual assessment of the Indian and Afghan threats to their country. With deference I would submit that we should take Pakistan's assessment, rather than our own, into account, since it appears to be the overriding factor in this particular equation. This is not to suggest that we should alter our fundamental neutrality as between the two rivals in the sub-continent. Pakistan does not indeed expect this, however powerfully she may urge it. But I think we shall put less strain on Pakistan's friendship, and indeed get much more out of her, if in the context of our Bagdad Pact relationship with her we endeavour to see the Middle East scene through admittedly powerful and oversimplifying Pakistani lenses.

6. So far as I can judge Pakistan is particularly pleased with her Turkish ally who, she doubtless hopes, will, *inter alia*, bring a restraining influence to bear on Afghanistan. She has recently strengthened her diplomatic representation in Turkey, Iraq and Iran. Egypt under Colonel Nasser she has virtually written off. In the Levant States her role is largely that of anxious observer, though it is significant that she has recently appointed a Minister to the Lebanon. Of all the Arab countries outside the Bagdad Pact Saudi Arabia claims her closest attention and her diplomatic representation in Jedda is of the strongest. Is her belief that the Saudi brand can be plucked from the burning, and that Pakistan may be the chosen instrument here, so very wide of the mark?

7. The importance of the Arabian Peninsula to West Pakistan is obvious: independence and partition in 1947 have had no effect on geography. Moreover the custody of the Holy Places is a far more vital question in Karachi to-day than ever it was in the Imperial Delhi of yesterday. I have also noticed that, whereas other Arabs, with characteristic arrogance, tend to look down on Pakistanis as an inferior race, the Saudis are far more friendly-disposed. Urdu, for example, virtually unknown in other Arab States, is quite widely spoken in Jedda, Mecca and Medina, possibly due to the extensive pilgrim traffic. I have not so far had the opportunity to visit the East Coast but I understand that Saudi-Pakistani links are even closer there than

in the Hejaz; there are, of course, numerous Pakistanis—and for that matter Indians—in the Persian Gulf Sheikdoms and Muscat. Above all the prestige of the old Indian army, so amply earned in two world wars, lingers in this peninsula: it was in fact under its indirect shadow that Ibn Saud was able to consolidate his Kingdom.

8. I turn now to the recent visit of the Pakistan Prime Minister and his Chief of General Staff. There is no doubt whatsoever that Mohamad Ali's quiet but very effective personality made the best of impressions on all Saudis with whom he came in contact. My Pakistani colleague has of course been assiduously preparing this rather stony ground during the eighteen months he has been in Jedda; but I shall be surprised if the seeds that Mohamad Ali sowed with such conspicuous skill do not germinate. His main contact with King Saud, apart from a number of social and religious engagements, was in an audience of two and a half hours immediately prior to his departure, of which I have already given an account in my telegram No. 231 of the 30th of July. That Mohamad Ali was able to extract from the King, who is strongly opposed to the Bagdad Pact, an admission—on oath—that he accepted Pakistan's position in the Pact is a noteworthy achievement. The King's acknowledgment that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia were natural allies is also important; and his promise of full support to Pakistan over Kashmir naturally gratified Mohamad Ali.

9. This is, I think, the first time that King Saud has ever heard from a fellow Muslim of eminence, and one for whom he has profound respect, a thorough-going unapologetic justification, not only of the Bagdad Pact but also of a policy of full alignment with the West. The King's subsequent declaration—again on oath—that, as between the Communist and Western *blocs*, his inclinations lay with the West is not new, but is none the less satisfactory. His admission, however, that in present world conditions neutralism was impossible is of considerable significance, and incidentally a set-back for the self-righteous planners of Brioni. Mohamad Ali's handling of the Buraimi issue, in which he exceeded the brief handed to him in London by taxing the King with making insatiable territorial claims, was all that could be desired. And my American colleague has recently expressed his appreciation of the line taken by the Pakistan

Prime Minister over the supply of Western arms to Saudi Arabia, which not only agreed with the advice repeatedly given by the American Military Mission in this country but would also be of assistance in his current negotiations for the renewal of the Dhahran Air Base Agreement.

10. Mohamad Ali's final point that, although Pakistan had no arms to supply, she gladly offered all her available training facilities; and that King Saud might see advantage in relying on his natural ally here, rather than on less disinterested countries, was not only a useful "detachment" exercise but also opens up some highly interesting "replacement" possibilities. The King readily took Mohamad Ali's point, and agreed with pleasure to Major-General Sher Ali Khan inspecting Saudi military establishments. I knew the late Nawab of Pataudi well, having once been his Political Agent, so it was a pleasure to meet his forthright younger brother. In Jedda the Nawabzaba inspected *inter alia* the pride of the Saudi army, the parachute troops. He noted, with amusement, the Saudi commander's irritation when the Egyptian instructors tried to show off, and made disparaging remarks about Saudi Arabia. The Nawabzaba was in fact appalled by the rudimentary instruction so far imparted by the Egyptians; and when the latter attempted to swamp him with technicalities saw them straight off the parade ground. They had unfortunately not realised they were talking to a former commanding officer of the Pakistan Parachute Brigade! I do not know how Sher Ali Khan's subsequent visits to Taif and Riyadh passed off but before he left Jedda he had decided, with my encouragement, to advocate the immediate opening in Pakistan of a rush Arabic course for suitable officer and other rank instructors. It is satisfactory that the Minister of Defence, Prince Mishaal, who is under strong Egyptian influence, is shortly to visit Pakistan; and I have little doubt that we shall soon see some of the Egyptian instructors now in this country replaced by Pakistanis, as well as Saudi officers going to Pakistan for training.

11. The value to the West of Mohamad Ali's recent visit to Saudi Arabia has thus been considerable. Ability and personality apart, the Pakistan Prime Minister was able to achieve the results he did because he was able to demonstrate to King Saud that Pakistan had in truth given the Arabs consistent support on every occasion, regard-

less of possible repercussions on her own Kashmir question. The genuinely Islamic guiding principles of both countries also helped. We have on occasion doubtless been somewhat put out when Pakistan has followed an Islamic rather than a Commonwealth line. In my view, however, this course of action has largely been dictated to her by Nehru's otherwise more powerful appeal; and has been adhered to far more from motives of internal and external policy than from conviction. Islam is in fact her chief stock in trade, in this part of the world at any rate: her one solid advantage over India. Her resultant concern, exaggerated on occasion, over Arab susceptibilities seems to me to reflect not so much any narrow, selfish interest as her general, and compelling, need not to weaken any influence or appeal she may have in the area. That Pakistan's influence will be exerted to the common, Western good I have little doubt: to exert it at all she has to follow her own somewhat devious way. Thus over Buraimi my Pakistani colleague has been at pains to emphasise the danger of arousing Arab emotions, not because he disagrees with our policy here or indeed questions the facts on which it is based; but because, with Arab emotions aroused, it would be difficult for Pakistan to support us in such circumstances without seriously compromising the position she has tried to build up in the Middle East. Similarly I find no difficulty in understanding her fear of Pakistan military personnel in Bahrain or Muscat becoming involved in active operations. These apprehensions are personal to her, in her present somewhat delicate position. At the same time I should judge Pakistan to be fully as anxious as any other Muslim member of the Bagdad Pact that the Persian Gulf rulers should be strengthened against subversion from within and pressure from without.

12. From the conversation I had with the Pakistan Prime Minister it was obvious that, of all the Arab countries outside the Pact, he regarded Saudi Arabia as Pakistan's best bet. I see no reason to disagree with him. Pakistan's interest, as I have already attempted to show, is both historic and considerable in the Arabian Peninsula and the Saudis are the most friendly-disposed to her of all Arabs. The success achieved by Mohamad Ali in his short stay in this country seems to me amply to vindicate Pakistani optimism over the role their country can play here; and if anyone can

influence the Saudis towards a more responsible Middle East policy, and incidentally displace the numerous Egyptian experts at present in this country, I should say it was Pakistan.

13. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Washington, the Political Resident in the Persian

Gulf at Bahrain, the Political Representative with the Middle East Forces at Nicosia, the Governor of Aden and the Acting United Kingdom High Commissioner at Karachi.

I have, &c.

R. W. PARKES.

ES 1781/9

No. 32

THE PILGRIMAGE TO THE HEJAZ IN 1956

Mr. Parkes to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received August 16)

(No. 56. Confidential) *Jedda,*
August 11, 1956.
 Sir,

I have the honour to submit a brief report on the Pilgrimage of 1956 (1375 A.H.), which took place in the first half of July.

2. Accurate figures of the numbers of pilgrims who came to Saudi Arabia this year are not yet available. The Government Information Services put the number of overseas pilgrims at over 200,000; but these figures are generally regarded in Jedda as exaggerated and pilgrim transport concerns maintain that this was a lean year for them.

3. Distinguished pilgrims this year included the Queen of Libya, the Prime Minister and Chief of General Staff of Pakistan, the Prime Minister of Northern Nigeria and Federal Minister of Land, Mines and Power, Mirghani Hamza, Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of the Sudan, and Mohammed Natsir, Chairman of the Masjumi Party of Indonesia. The two latter were known to me and I was thus able to offer them some hospitality which they appeared greatly to appreciate. I also entertained the two Nigerian Ministers and the Pakistan Chief of General Staff.

4. Despite the specific Koranic injunction that political matters may not be discussed on the pilgrimage, this year's ceremony was marred by a political incident. The lesser of the two Islamic Congresses, the headquarters of which are in Jerusalem, elected to hold a reception in Mecca for distinguished pilgrims of all nations. The King was approached and gave the necessary permission. The Egyptian contingent, however, raised preliminary objections on the ground that there was no other Congress but theirs and that Colonel Anwar Sadat was its mouthpiece. These objections being rejected, they then expressed apprehension lest one Ramadhani of the Jerusalem Congress, who had been expelled from Egypt for membership of the Muslim Brotherhood, might use the occasion to attack Colonel Nasser. The Minister of the Interior, Prince Abdullah Feisal, was then approached and explained that since the King had given his permission

for the reception it was not in his power to forbid it. He would, however, order Ramadhani not to speak, and delegate a C.I.D. officer to ensure that he did not.

5. Apparently not satisfied with this assurance a large Egyptian party, believed to have been organised by Colonel Ali Khashaba, "First Secretary" of the Egyptian Embassy at Jedda, arrived early on the day of the reception and packed the hall. The reception was first addressed by Mohammed Natsir of Indonesia in a speech which had been approved beforehand by King Saud. Another member of the Congress then rose to express his pleasure at seeing the representatives of various member countries present, whom he proceeded to enumerate. Egypt, not being a member of the Congress, was thus not mentioned, whereupon the Egyptian party stood up to a man and chanted pro-Nasser slogans. Some wild hooliganism then ensued and the reception broke up in disorder. King Saud was furious when he heard of this disturbance, and according to Yusuf Yasin has decreed that, whilst no blame attaches to the Jerusalem Congress, no political gatherings of any kind will be allowed next year.

6. The King, as in previous years, was much in evidence throughout the pilgrimage. He led the various religious ceremonies and took more than perfunctory notice of the pilgrims' transport arrangements. In Mecca he entertained all the most important pilgrims to dinner and the usual address was delivered to the pilgrims. As is the custom when the King's speech (of which an excerpt forms the annex to this despatch) is more than a few sentences long, it was not made by the King, but by Yusuf Yasin: and in response a Lebanese bard eulogised the King in extempore verse. The military parade, which was expected to take place in Jedda after the pilgrimage, was cancelled for unspecified reasons.

7. Unbearable though the summer climate of the Hejaz is, the weather for the pilgrimage was apparently good for the time of year. Even so many cases of sun-stroke were reported, the authorities

attributing them more to the excessive ardour of the pilgrims than to the heat of the sun. Many devout Muslims believe that to die on the pilgrimage ensures direct entry into Paradise and a place in the front row of the Faithful on the day of judgment, although the majority of Imams maintain that, even if a pilgrim dies in the shade of the Prophet's tomb at Medina or the Ka'aba at Mecca, his soul will be whisked away from these holy places unless his life has been impeccable. A number of pilgrims thus mistakenly insist on wandering barefoot and bareheaded in the mid-day sun and deliberately expose themselves, clad only in the ihram, which consists of two pieces of unsewn cloth (usually bath towels), one around the waist and the other over one shoulder. There have been cases this year, as I believe there have been in previous years, where Muslims, frustrated by the disobliging elements, have thrown themselves under vehicles rather than return from the pilgrimage.

8. From the moment he sets foot on the sacred soil of Saudi Arabia until he leaves, the pilgrim is in the now quite capable hands of a mutawif who acts as spiritual as well as tourist guide. This year the mutawif service seems to have been particularly good though their work was complicated by the fact that pilgrims are not now allowed to remain in Saudi Arabia after the pilgrimage. In previous years pilgrims have been able to stay in Mecca to carry on religious studies, or to work in the country. The mutawifs have thus had the additional task this season of ensuring that no pilgrim wishing to stay on eluded them.

9. Despite Saudi efforts to improve his lot the pilgrim continues to make the pilgrimage as uncomfortable and unpleasant as possible for himself. The idea that "the pilgrimage is a trial" is still prevalent, and although the authorities have provided better accommodation for the pilgrims with succeeding years, pilgrims still contrive to turn any shelter offered to them into a shambles. For the past two months the airport at Jedda has been in complete chaos. This in no way reflects upon the efficiency of the pilgrimage flights which this year have run with commendable smoothness. But pilgrims, in their desire to return home as soon as possible, have used every spare plot of ground in and around the airport to camp with their few belongings; and once settled in have refused to move, and have eaten, slept, bathed and prayed where they were.

The consequent cesspools and fouled air made it all the more remarkable that no serious outbreak of epidemic disease has been reported. I cannot help thinking that many pilgrims simply do not wish to have an uneventful pilgrimage. For most of them the event comes once in a lifetime, and when they return home they want to be able to talk about some highly coloured privations.

10. Whilst on the subject of the health problems which the pilgrimage inevitably poses I should make some mention of the sterling work of the Nigerian and Malayan Pilgrimage Missions. Both have medical missions attached to them, and with the limited resources at their disposal set up posts at Medina and Mecca and tended their sick pilgrims as and when necessary. The Nigerians made their headquarters in this Embassy and were very appreciative of the help they received: they were excellent guests and gave no trouble.

11. There is always talk of pilgrims being enslaved whilst in Saudi Arabia, but no cases have come to notice this year. The new ban on pilgrims remaining in this country will of course make it more difficult for would-be buyers of slaves, but one loop-hole still remains. Pilgrims not infrequently die and their bodies naturally never leave the country. It would thus be perfectly possible for the death of a pilgrim to be reported, and his personal effects sent to his local representative, whilst the individual concerned is in fact still alive, but enslaved.

12. So large a congregation of the Faithful in the Holy Places seems to call forth the worst instincts of many of the inhabitants, and prices of taxis and food rose to formidable heights during the pilgrimage. Petty theft did not, however, end there, and from the moment that the Faithful returned to Jedda from Mecca retribution has had regularly to be meted out in the main street. Scarcely a Friday has passed without a number of hands being lopped off, and on one occasion the performance had to be repeated on Saturday. Public floggings have been of frequent occurrence and, though execution is no longer carried out in Jedda, a Yemeni was beheaded for murder at Mina during the actual pilgrimage.

13. On the whole this year's pilgrimage seems to have run as smoothly as can be expected in this country, although officialdom treated the pilgrims to a taste of red

tape at its worst and no doubt many pilgrims went home wondering whether the Holy Land was in truth a foretaste of Paradise. A significant proportion of those taking part this year were elderly and officials here are seriously worried lest the rising generation of Muslims are losing interest in the pilgrimage. It is possible that, since the pilgrimage need only be performed once during a Muslim's life, a younger, softer generation prefers to avoid it when it falls within the summer months. After all they have plenty of time before them, and postponement for a mere fifteen years or so will secure for them such coolness as the inhospitable Hejaz can offer in winter. Time alone will show whether Saudi apprehensions of youthful apostasy are justified or not.

I have, &c.

R. W. PARKES.

ANNEX

Excerpt from King Saud's Speech to the Assembled Pilgrims

Islam has provided liberty for nations, peoples and individuals. It has decreed equality between freemen, slaves, masters and servants. It has taught us to live free in our country, neither dominated nor tyrannised.

In the light of Islamic teachings we have tried to reunite the Arabs and Muslims and to frustrate the intrigues of the enemies of Islam. The result of this was our meetings in Cairo and Jedda to support our Arab brothers in their struggle for independence.

We have made agreements and pledged to assemble and unite our forces. We are enemies of those who desire our enmity and friends of those who seek our friendship.

We intend no aggression on anyone and we will not tolerate aggression by anyone on ourselves.

With some of our Muslim brothers we have decided to convene an Islamic Conference to be held in this Holy Place. Invitations have been sent to Kings and Presidents of Muslim countries and the first meeting of this conference will be held here at an early opportunity.

It is God's grace that our land contains the treasure which enables us to carry out our country's projects, particularly the expansion of the Medina mosque. It is God's grace also that we are able to continue with the expansion of the mosque at Mecca, which after completion will accommodate about 400,000 pilgrims. We feel great pleasure when we spend from God's gifts on reforms in this country. The cost of these projects is estimated at 500 million riyals. The sole object of this expenditure is to enable pilgrims, whose numbers are increasing year by year, to discharge their religious obligations with comfort and ease.

We are now making arrangements for the repair of the Hejaz railway line between Medina and Damascus and also for the construction of a line between Medina, Jedda and Riyadh to connect there with the line to Damman.

With God's help we were able to share in the renovations of the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, and we are prepared to contribute and sacrifice further so that the results may be the best possible. We are also prepared to protect and guard it, together with other Arabs and any of our Muslim brothers willing to help.

We have in hand many projects to raise the standards of health, education and construction of the country to a level worthy of it.

We pray God to help us to fulfil these projects and may He accept our pilgrimage and lead you back to your homes safe and sound.

ES 10316/10

No. 33

SAUDI-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS

Mr. Parkes to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received August 16)

(No. 57. Confidential)
Sir,

Jedda,
August 11, 1956.

In paragraph 11 (a) of my despatch No. 35 of the 20th of May I referred to Saudi uneasiness at the alliance with Revolutionary Egypt and suggested that the fundamental dissimilarities between the two countries might largely suffice to bring about its dissolution. There are indications that this process has already begun, though it is a process which must inevitably in its early stages be tentative and cautious since the Saudi régime is fortunately conscious of the unwisdom of prematurely alienating Colonel Nasser. In this despatch I propose to examine the present somewhat conflicting situation.

2. Foremost among the points of potential friction between the Saudi and Egyptian régimes is the conflict of ambitions of their two leaders. King Saud is vain and is not disposed to accept the role of puppet custodian of the Holy Places and Paymaster-General for which Cairo has so obviously cast him. "The whole Middle East looks to me for leadership" he has been reported as saying. Now that Colonel Nasser's own ambitions in this regard are uncompromisingly out in the open their mutual contradiction is obvious.

3. Another important dissimilarity lies in the national character of the two countries. The Egyptian is effervescent, emotional, conceited and over-bearing: on the least provocation he overplays his hand: impulse, not caution, dictates his actions. By contrast the Saudi, though equally arrogant and conceited, has a far shrewder outlook and a marked tendency to look before he leaps. The ostentatious absurdities of lecherous Saudi Princes turned loose with more money than sense, no less than the presence in so many positions of authority inside the country of alien Levantine and Egyptian importees, tend to obscure those Saudi officials, humble and frustrated, who in the ultimate analysis comprise the indigenous intelligentsia of this country. The judgment of these men is not unsound: their evolution has been less rapid than that of other Arabs and they have not forgotten Ibn Saud's lengthy and

profitable association with the West. To a man they are jealous of their Egyptian and Levantine over-lords, and they are still readily impressed by any show of Western force or determination. In short the vast majority are potential "camel diplomats": Britain's successive stands over Buraimi, Cyprus, Aden and now the Suez Canal are noticeably bringing them more and more out into the open.

4. All things being equal—and in this troubled region they seldom are—I should say that, for King Saud, the Saudi-Egyptian connection, confirmed but not initiated by the Military Pact of 1955, has by now outlived its usefulness. It came into being at a time when Saudi Arabia was a virtual nonentity among Middle East nations, and at a time also when Egyptian imperialist designs were less noticeable. To-day the attraction of a ride on the Egyptian bandwagon has largely passed. Indeed that wagon, now running so recklessly, looks likely in any event to give King Saud and his Government a nasty spill. If Nasser wins, Arab monarchies will go: if Nasser loses, King Saud too will be involved in the crash. For reasons of vanity and policy alike, therefore, I think that King Saud would now gladly ease himself out of his link with Egypt.

5. This, however, is easier said than done. Her alliance with Egypt has left this country deeply penetrated by Egyptian influence, and Colonel Nasser could overnight set on foot a spate of subversive activity, if not an actual *coup d'état*. For the past few weeks I have been trying to form some idea of the numbers and distribution of Egyptian nationals in Saudi Arabia. My findings, which have been cross-checked with my American, French, Pakistani, Iraqi and German colleagues, are contained in the Appendix to this despatch. The results are not a little disquieting. The particular fields in which Egyptian influence is conspicuously at work are the armed forces, the police and the schools—just those elements, in fact, which would be the obvious choice of a Junta headquarters plotting subversion from Cairo. Egyptian influence in the field of education is of course of long-term

significance and not confined to Saudi Arabia. Even so I was disturbed to note from certain figures published in Egypt, that this country headed the list of Egyptian teachers earmarked for next year's sinister output: 483 are destined for Saudi Arabia compared with 420 for Libya, 304 for Kuwait and, somewhat surprisingly, 131 for Iraq.

6. I do not think that the degree of Egyptian penetration here has yet reached dangerous proportions, though it is nonetheless considerable, not so much in number as in degree. Prince Mishal, the Minister of Defence, is said to be completely under the thumb of one of his Egyptian advisers: it is therefore satisfactory that he has recently received, and accepted, an invitation to visit Pakistan. There are also indications that Prince Abdullah Feisal, Minister of the Interior and thus largely responsible for internal security, is attracted by the tinsel brilliance of Egyptian culture and expertise. It is just possible that the latter may have inherited that jealousy of King Saud, which his father, Prince Feisal, no longer has the energy or will to demonstrate. Indeed if the Egyptians were casting round for a suitable puppet candidate for the Saudi throne their choice would probably fall on Abdullah Feisal. This, I admit, is highly speculative, but it is far from incredible; and it is against this kind of highly coloured background that the King is, I think, at present groping myopically towards a decisive foreign policy.

7. There are signs that King Saud, who is more and more taking reins into his own hands with a surprisingly sure touch, is bent on checking Egyptian influence in Saudi Arabia so far as he is able. The Egyptian military advisers recently advocated a rapid expansion of the Saudi army to two divisions. This, it is estimated, would have involved importing 2,000 more Egyptian advisers, instructors and technicians. Prince Mishal was attracted by the idea, and Yusuf Yasin accordingly opened his mouth widely in the Dhahran Base negotiations. In the event the King intervened decisively, reverted to the more cautious original suggestions of the American Military Mission and instructed Yusuf Yasin and Prince Mishal accordingly. He has also stubbornly refused over the past few months to buy Communist arms, and to recognise Red China, both of which courses were urged upon him by Colonel Nasser. Further examples of

Saudi caution are the reversal of an original decision to borrow thirty-two Egyptian technical advisers to work in the Ministry of Communications, and the decision not to employ Egyptian programme and technical staff in the newly planned expansion of Radio Mecca. Pakistan, Western Germany and Britain are instead to be asked to help. (My Chancery letter No. 1433/56 of the 10th of August.)

8. In present circumstances, however, King Saud's hands are pretty well tied. This is clearly shown by his reactions to Colonel Nasser's seizure of the Suez Canal. I am reliably informed that the King was furious when he heard the news. He had not been consulted, any more than he was consulted over Nasser's recognition of Red China, and there were obvious dangers in it for himself. He accordingly sent no congratulatory telegram. The following day, the 27th of July, Sawt al Arab made a somewhat inimical reference to Saudi Arabia; and Saudi official support of Colonel Nasser's action quickly followed. It was minimal, certainly, but it came, and indeed it had to come.

9. In recent weeks the Egyptian jackboot has been in increasing evidence. One example is afforded by their tactless behaviour in Mecca during the Pilgrimage, at the reception given by the rival Islamic Congress (paragraphs 4 and 5 of my despatch No. 56 of the 11th of August). The Suez Canal crisis has naturally accelerated the process. I have reported by telegram the dispersal of a fair-sized Egyptian demonstration (one Saudi policeman remarking significantly—he presumably had Sudanese friends—that whereas Egyptians were very good at talking he himself remembered Falluja). The Saudis were alarmed at this and have strengthened police guards on Western missions: the Americans, previously unprotected, now have thirty plain clothes policemen on duty. An Egyptian whispering campaign, claiming *inter alia* a workers' demand for the nationalisation of Aramco, and a workers' agreement to destroy the wells at the first sign of Western aggression on Egypt has also not passed unnoticed. King Saud, however, cannot count on popular support should he wish to break decisively with Egypt at this stage. Egyptian propaganda is so insidious that, despising the Egyptian as the average Saudi undoubtedly does, he could yet be roused against his King and Government, since that Government is

manifestly inadequate and corrupt and Sawt al Arab, by voicing Saudi dissatisfaction here, could virtually shame him into action.

10. In the turbulent months or years ahead of us in the Middle East Saudi Arabia's role may be important. I think it is fair to say that King Saud's personal inclinations are now away from Nasser, emphatically not towards the Communist bloc, not noticeably towards Brioni neutralism and thus, on balance, tentatively towards the West. The Arab currents aroused by Nasser's policies are, however, powerful: to avoid being swept away, this vulnerable lightweight needs ballast, support and greater confidence. Who is to provide these? That Pakistan may be able significantly to help here is suggested in my despatch No. 54 of the 9th of August.

11. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassadors at Cairo and Washington, the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, the Governor of Aden and the Political Representative with the Middle East Forces.

I have, &c.

R. W. PARKES.

Appendix

Egyptians in Saudi Arabia

1. The Palace

There are fortunately few Egyptians close to King Saud. The most important are two technical advisers, Dr. Abdur Rahman Azzam (United Nations) and Dr. Abdul Moneim Mustapha (legal).

The King's Aide-de-Camp is Egyptian, as also is his chief interpreter.

Two Egyptians are being brought in to advise on protocol arrangements in the Palace.

Prince Mohammed, the most active and influential of the King's sons, has an Egyptian secretary.

2. The Armed Forces

Prince Mishal, Minister of Defence, has two senior Egyptian advisers, Wing-Commander Mohammed Mansour Maharani and Husni Bey Khairallah. He is further advised by an Egyptian Military Mission of fifteen officers under a lieutenant-colonel. The Mission also includes some fifty other ranks, mainly tank, signals

and transport technicians. There is an undetermined number of Egyptian civilians engaged in maintenance at Taif, al Kharj, Dammam and Riyadh.

The training of the Parachute Group in Jedda is largely in the hands of three Egyptian officers and ten other ranks. Two Egyptian officers are attached to the staff of the Saudi commander of Dhahran Airport. Six Egyptian officers are on the staff of the Flying School in Jedda: only the chief instructor is Saudi.

Ten officers of the Egyptian Air Force, varying in rank from squadron leader to warrant officer, are engaged at Jedda airport as mechanics. They are dressed as civilians. Ten more are said to be coming. Thirty other Egyptians—genuine civilians—are also to be engaged for maintenance duties with the Saudi Air Force.

The new Military Academy at Riyadh has a Saudi administrative staff, but the heads of all seven teaching departments are Egyptian majors or captains. There are also twenty-five Egyptian civilian instructors. The ten military preparatory schools throughout the country are staffed exclusively by Egyptians.

At least two Egyptians are concerned in the management of the ammunition factory at al Kharj. (See footnote.)

3. Police and the Ministry of the Interior

Prince Abdullah Feisal, Minister of the Interior, is believed to be largely influenced by a close Egyptian friend of his. Ten Egyptian police officers were invited to Saudi Arabia in May 1956 in connection with police reorganisation in the major towns. As a result thirty Egyptian police officers are now training Saudi police in Riyadh. A further Egyptian training group arrived in June, but it is not known whether they have yet begun work.

Egyptian advisers are regularly attached to the Ministry to advise on Pilgrimage and other traffic problems. The Chief of Police at Dammam has an Egyptian adviser.

The Saudi Coastguard are trained by Egyptians, either here or in Alexandria.

4. Schools

There are at present some 670 Egyptian school teachers in Saudi Arabia. A further 485 are expected here very shortly.

Egyptian experts have been attached to the Ministry of Education to advise on the establishment of a university at Riyadh.

The headmaster and staff of the best and most influential school in the country, Taif Secondary School, are Egyptian.

5. Public Works

The planning of the new municipality at Riyadh is under the general direction of a Palestinian. The planning staff, however, comprises four Egyptians.

Three of the five contractors erecting the new palaces and carrying out public works in Riyadh are Egyptians, and there is said to be a labour force there of 7,000 Egyptians. There are at least 1,000 Egyptian labourers in the Hejaz.

6. Hospitals

Half the Ministry of Health is said to be Egyptian. Most of the doctors in the Government hospitals in Jedda and Mecca are Egyptian, as also are the doctors in the Jedda Quarantine Station.

7. Ministry of Finance

There are very few Egyptians in this branch of the Government. Two statistical experts, however, are shortly expected from Egypt.

8. Oil Companies

Aramco employ relatively few Egyptians, certainly less than .7 per cent. of their employees. By contrast they employ 6.8 per cent. Pakistanis, and 3.2 per cent. Palestinians. Two Egyptians are employed by the Getty Oil Company.

9. Press and Radio

Many technicians in the local presses are Egyptian. The editor of the Medina newspaper is Egyptian. There is, however, only one Egyptian in the Saudi Directorate of Broadcasting and Propaganda (as opposed to eighty Saudis and fifteen Lebanese).

10. Other Categories

A large number of the building, electrical and mechanical firms in Jedda, Mecca and, to a lesser extent, Riyadh employ Egyptians in technical capacities.

The Ministry of Communications has two Egyptian advisers.

The Accountancy Section of the Council of Ministers employs an Egyptian in an influential position.

The Complaints Bureau of the Council of Ministers is almost entirely staffed by Egyptians; only the Director, Prince Musaid bin Abdur Rahman, and his personal secretary are Saudis.

There are a few Egyptians in the Customs and Port Management in Jedda, one of whom is a retired Admiral of the Egyptian Navy.

The veterinary surgeon at the Government Farm at al-Kharj is Egyptian.

The Banque Du Caire is established in Jedda, with branches in Riyadh and al Khobar. A second Egyptian bank will shortly open in Jedda.

FOOTNOTE—

There are a number of high ranking Egyptian officers at Riyadh and Tebuk in connection with the Egyptian-Saudi Military Pact. No details are known.

ES 1111/19

No. 34

SHORTAGE OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE IN SAUDI ARABIA

Mr. Parkes to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received August 17)

(No. 58 E. Confidential)
Sir,

Jedda,
August 12, 1956.

In my telegram No. 235⁽¹⁾ of the 3rd of August I reported that an acute shortage of foreign exchange had developed in Jedda, and that there was doubt whether foreign exchange available to local banks from official sources would suffice to cover normal commercial imports into the country. In the present despatch I have the honour to offer some comments on the development of such a situation in a country the large and growing income of which is received almost entirely in foreign exchange.

2. The last Government budget drawn up in Saudi Arabia covered the Hejira year 1374, which ran from August 1954 to August 1955. For the Hejira year 1375 (August 1955–August 1956) no budget was approved by the Council of Ministers. The draft has been complete for some months now and agreement reached on budgetary allocations for the various Government departments; but since the Council of Ministers has so far been unable to agree on the text to be published it has now been decided to make the best of a bad job and work for its publication early in 1376. It will then be modified so as to apply to the year 1376 (August 1956–August 1957)!

3. Even when it does appear, however, the budget is unlikely to be a very instructive document. Its predecessor was clearly intended more to allay concern about the mis-spending of oil revenues than to serve as a guide in departmental expenditure. Obscure and unreliable though it was, the last budget did admit that during the year ending in August 1955 the Saudi Arabian Government's expenditure would exceed its revenue by an estimated £21 million. This deficit was to be met out of the "General Reserve Fund," but this fund, created by the 1952 budget, seems never to have existed except on paper. To two Saudi creditors alone the Government is rumoured to be indebted to the extent of £40 million, so the chances of using the "General Reserve Fund" to meet a budgetary deficit seem meagre. During the past 12 months there has been no moderation in the rate of Government spending; on the contrary, the number of new projects launched, or contracts placed, has probably been greater than ever before. Of this Government expenditure a certain proportion takes the form of internal debt. Building contractors working on large construction projects know well enough when they put in their tenders that payment will be long delayed, and that the Government's internal riyal debts may never be paid in full. To protect himself the contractor increases his quotation for the work by as much as a third. The Ministry of Finance seem to accept this practice; they know that the contractor is overcharging, and therefore find it convenient to put off the day of payment of the debt. The contractor, who by pressure on officials is usually able to get a proportion of his bill settled, has to wait indefinitely for the full payment of the bill; but meanwhile gains a measure of local prestige and the assurance of continuing Government contracts by virtue of his position as a Government creditor.

4. This large internal debt is largely attributable to the various extravagant building schemes to which the Government is committed. These include the reconstruction of the Prophet's Mosque at Mecca and its approaches (for which £3½ million has already been paid out as compensation to dispossessed landowners), the rebuilding of the mosque at Medina, the transformation of Riyadh from a primitive desert stronghold into a jerry-built 20th century Arab city, and the building and equipping of a number of schools and hospitals for which staff are not yet available. These projects all require large labour forces and may thus help to maintain a high level of employment. However desirable this may be for political reasons, it has been embarrassing to the Government from the purely

⁽¹⁾ Not printed.

monetary point of view, and the immense demand for riyals to pay wage bills could, until the opening of the Monetary Agency's branches in Riyadh and Dammam, only be met by the local sale of foreign exchange.

5. Domestic overspending in riyals by the Government would not of itself have brought about the present shortage of foreign exchange, for though the position is now acute (the free market rate for the dollar has just reached the record figure of 4 riyals and 3 gersh), it has been unsatisfactory for some time. Exchange issues to banks by the Monetary Agency have been insufficient for some months, and officials of the Monetary Agency now admit openly that at present there are not enough dollars or sterling available to them to cover the country's normal commercial imports. The problem is to discover what is happening to the large sums in foreign exchange (not far from half the country's receipts in dollars and sterling) which are never made available to the Monetary Agency for issue to the banks.

6. Aramco's payments to the Saudi Arabian Government in 1955 in respect of rents, royalties and tax payments totalled \$261 million. To this must be added an estimated \$40 million in respect of goods and services purchased locally by Aramco. Other foreign currency receipts such as those obtained from the pilgrimage, from exports other than oil and from invisible exports might account for another \$76 million. In addition to these revenues \$93 million were borrowed by the Saudi Arabian Government during 1955 from banks against the security of expected oil revenues. Of the approximate total income in foreign exchange of \$470 million from all sources, \$67 million were repaid directly by Aramco to banks in redemption of loans already made by the banks to the Saudis against expected revenue. Of the remaining \$403 million, \$6 million were accounted for by repayment to Aramco of the annual instalment of the cost of the Riyadh-Dammam railway, and \$1 million in respect of a loan from the Export-Import Bank. Total payments by the Saudi Arabian Government under the heading of imported goods and accountable invisible imports can hardly exceed \$200 million. There is thus a sum of the order of \$200 million which is being used for other purposes. This exceeds by some \$25 million the Saudi Arabian Government's unaccounted balance for 1954 as computed by Aramco.

7. No statement of the amount of exchange issued each month by the Monetary Agency to banks is ever published here, nor for that matter has the Agency's balance sheet ever been made public. It is known, however, that between September 1, 1955, and February 29, 1956, a total of £20 million and \$49 million was issued to banks. From January 1, 1956, to June 30, 1956, the average monthly rate of issues has been about £2,800,000 and \$11 million. Issues to banks for the first half of 1956 totalled about \$112 million (about £16.8 million and \$66 million).

8. What is happening to the residue of the country's foreign exchange? A certain proportion of the residue may be accounted for by purchases by Saudi Government departments for which credits are opened by the Ministry of Finance and not through the medium of local banks. It is known for certain that monthly allocations of foreign currency made available by the Ministry to the Monetary Agency for issue to banks have at the last minute been cut by the Ministry of Finance, which since last year has been able to raid the Agency for additional funds without fear of opposition. These sudden demands for extra money may be for purchase of arms, for loans to other Arab States, such as those to Syria or Yemen, for bounties and grants from the King to religious institutions abroad, or for the more sinister purposes of political intrigue or bribery abroad. All observers agree that some of the Saudi foreign exchange residue is being spent in this way, but it is possible to overestimate the amount. Although I understand, for example, that it costs as much as £1 million to ensure a satisfactory result in a Syrian presidential election it is difficult to believe that the Saudi Arabian Government manage to spend £72 million in all on such purposes.

9. There can be no doubt that despite the control, now rather haphazardly exercised, on remittances abroad by foreign labourers and technicians, money can be freely transferred abroad by members of the Royal Family, senior Government officials and influential merchants. Many influential Saudis are known to own property in Beirut and Cairo, to be part-owners of banks there or to have substantial sums invested in Switzerland or the United States. (One Emir has even joined forces in Jeddah with a graduate of an American business college to form a company,

the sole purpose of which is investment on the New York stock exchange!) The Minister of Finance alone is generally believed to have accumulated a fortune of £20 million; and since the number of enterprises in Saudi Arabia in which he has some financial interest is generally estimated at 150, and certainly can hardly be less than 50, this estimate of his fortune may not be very inaccurate. It is also known that the Emir Abdullah ibn Abdur Rahman, the King's uncle, is a very rich man; and the King's emigré advisers are active investors, both in Saudi Arabia and abroad. Though it has proved impossible to secure reliable estimates of these private fortunes, there is no doubt that they have made considerable inroads into Saudi Arabia's wealth and in particular her foreign currency resources.

10. The need to halt large exports of capital was publicly acknowledged by the Government last year. A Royal Decree of April 23, 1955, prohibited the export of funds for investment abroad, and exhorted Saudi capitalists to invest their money in Saudi Arabia. Patriotism aside, the decree adduced the baser but more cogent argument that greater profits could be earned on investments in Saudi Arabia. Despite this clarion call to Saudis to forsake the ignoble attractions of Wall Street dividends or the proceeds of Cairo hotels, and to invest in the industrial or urban future of Saudi Arabia, substantial sums have undoubtedly continued to flow abroad. This Royal Decree has recently been brought to the attention of bank managers for a second time (on the personal orders of King Saud) by a circular from the Monetary Agency; but the banks are unable to offer much help when those who are exporting funds are powerful officials or members of the court circle. The decree states that its provisions are not to be applied only to the lowly, leaving those in high places their full freedom of action. But this, alas, is just what seems to have happened. Those in high places continue as before; Saudi princes and officials travel luxuriously outside Saudi Arabia on official or private journeys; and there are always dollars for those who know how to get them.

11. Work is certainly now proceeding on the preparation of exchange control regulations for Saudi Arabia, though a number of informed people here are opposed to their introduction for quite disinterested reasons. Such regulations would be just as difficult to enforce as the Royal Decree and would introduce unnecessary complications into business and banking. They are, moreover, unlikely to be effective in restraining those who are at present exporting capital for private investment, would adversely affect commerce, and the endless bureaucratic delays involved would irritate local merchants. At present the Government is hoping somewhat vaguely that by restricting the amount of exchange available they will compel merchants either to restrict their imports, which this year have been excessive and have led to overstocking, or to use for payment funds they may have invested abroad. There is not the slightest indication that this hope has been fulfilled. The merchants do not understand the difficulties which the banks are experiencing with the Monetary Agency, and simply blame the banks for not being able to provide their usual services in settling documentary bills or opening credits.

12. The present exchange crisis is in my opinion more serious than that which developed in October 1955. The situation was then saved by a sudden windfall of \$76 million from Aramco in respect of retroactive payments to the Saudi Arabian Government of income tax underpaid from 1953 to 1955. Aramco have let it be known that no comparable payment is likely to be made this year. Aramco have, however, now agreed to submit the accounts of their costs, and of the prices realised by the sale of products, to examination by chartered accountants in order to determine whether the Saudi Arabian Government would have been better or worse off had Aramco based its payments to the Government on a precise calculation of the profits accruing from sale of refined products rather than on the refinery fee of 8 cents a barrel. The Company have also agreed to refund volume discounts to the Saudi Arabian Government which would amount to some \$8 million. The amount payable to the Saudi Arabian Government as retroactive adjustment if the refinery fee is abandoned is unlikely to be large, and total Aramco additional payments this year will probably not reach even a quarter of the \$76 million paid last October. No salvation is thus to be expected from Aramco.

13. The operations of the Saudi Arabian Monetary Agency are cloaked in mystery, and the extent of its reserves are not disclosed. The American Governor of the Agency was deprived of a considerable measure of his power by a decree issued last summer which brought the Agency under the direct control of the Ministry of Finance. Thus prevented from exercising on the Saudi Arabian

Government the restraining influence for which his predecessor was noted, the present Governor now admits that he is merely a figurehead and refers to himself as "a moose-head on the wall." Nevertheless he seems to have done his best to convince the Ministry of Finance of the need to maintain as full a backing as possible for the paper "pilgrim receipts" now circulating, the number of which has recently been swollen by the issue of a further 200 million riyals' worth in the past three months. There are strong rumours that the Agency will publish its balance sheet shortly, and that before doing so steps are being taken to put its house in order. The Saudi Arabian Government is known to be buying gold, and it would be natural for them also to retain as much foreign exchange as possible to maintain the strength of the paper issue. However, the drain on available foreign exchange which this would entail would only partially explain the present exchange shortage. Even if one credits the familiar assurances of officials of the Monetary Agency and the Ministry of Finance that the paper issue will be 100 per cent. backed by gold, silver and foreign exchange, the total sum required for backing the new issue would be \$55 million at most. In practice this figure could be reduced by the value of the silver riyals now being withdrawn from circulation in favour of 1 riyal pilgrim receipts, which are being retained by the Monetary Agency.

14. That the Saudi Arabian Government is spending in excess of its revenues seems beyond doubt. I do not, however, foresee any restraint in Government expenditure; for reasons of prestige, if for no others, work must continue on the various expensive projects to which King Saud is now committed. But the present exchange difficulties have been sufficiently severe to give a jolt to the Minister of Finance and his colleagues in the Council of Ministers. To create a better façade of modern administration, the Government may thus be expected to issue a budget for the New Year now beginning; to introduce further measures intended to stop the flow of funds abroad for private non-commercial purposes which will probably once again illustrate that there is one law for the rich and another for the comparatively poor; and to take some steps to restore the now damaged public confidence in the Monetary Agency. It is generally felt that the foreign currency position in Jedda will get rather easier by September, when further dollar payments to the Saudi Arabian Government will fall due; and even though financial policy in Saudi Arabia may be unsound and administration corrupt, the country's economy is basically sound. It is certainly unbalanced and lacking in diversity, but with the prospect of oil revenues growing with each year of exploration and production the consequences of the folly and extravagance of Saudi Arabia's rulers, though regrettable, are unlikely to be economically catastrophic.

15. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassador at Cairo, to the Political Resident at Bahrain and to the Head of the Political Office with the Middle East Forces at Nicosia, to Commercial Relations and Exports Department and to Export Credits Guarantee Department, and am enclosing an additional copy for Her Majesty's Treasury.

I have, &c.

R. W. PARKES.

SECRET

ES 1102/6

No. 35

THE DEPENDENCE OF THE SAUDI ECONOMY ON THE SUEZ CANAL

Mr. Parkes to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received October 1)

(No. 62 E. Confidential)
Sir,

Jedda,

September 20, 1956.

Since Saudi Arabia has no natural resources other than oil, and broadly speaking no manufacturing industry apart from the oil industry created by the Arabian-American Oil Company, she is dangerously dependent upon imports. Of these a large proportion are carried through the Suez Canal. I have accordingly thought it timely to attempt an estimate of the economic effect on this country of a situation in which shipping through the Suez Canal was curtailed or obstructed. It is of some interest that, since the preparation of this Despatch was taken in hand, I have heard that the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Finance is working on a similar analysis. One of my motives in having this estimate made was to see whether Commonwealth countries in the sterling area could profit in any way from such a contingency; and whether any anticipatory measures were desirable.

2. Had any statistics for imports for 1955 or 1956 been published by the Saudi Arabian Government my task would have been relatively easy. Unfortunately such figures as are available relate to the years before 1953, and there have been a number of changes in the pattern of imports into Saudi Arabia since then. The enclosed memorandum,⁽¹⁾ which has been prepared by my Commercial Secretary, is therefore based largely on observation of the main sources of supply of the various types of goods imported into this country and complete accuracy is not claimed for it.

3. The main consequence here of any prolonged closure of the Suez Canal would be a considerable reduction in the scale and extent of building. Much of the mushroom building in progress at present is on Government account, and its postponement would not be a serious embarrassment. There would, however, be widespread unemployment in the labour force engaged on the various projects, and the resultant unrest would undoubtedly be dangerous for King Saud and his Government. A further effect of the diversion of shipping away from the Canal route would be a reduction in the amount of semi-luxury imports. Many importers in this market might find themselves in difficulties and some of the marginal firms and commission agents would probably be forced out of business.

4. For her supplies of foodstuffs and textiles Saudi Arabia would probably not find the closure of the Canal unduly embarrassing, although there would undoubtedly be hoarding and some disproportionate rises in prices. Increased prices of machinery and domestic articles normally obtained from Europe or the United States, and largely unobtainable from Asian sources, would tend to cut down indiscriminate spending, and thus have an altogether salutary effect on the finances of the country as a whole. There would undoubtedly be a hasty search for new sources of supply, and in the new situation I should expect the principal beneficiaries to be Japan, India, Pakistan, South and East Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Hong Kong is already in strenuous competition with Japan in this market, and for those goods which the colony could supply there should be an increased demand.

5. Although the effects of a closure of the Suez Canal would be serious for Saudi Arabia I see no reason to believe that this country would go short of its essential requirements. The routing of shipping round the Cape of Good Hope would have serious effects on the competitive position of British goods in a market where there are already far too many complaints that, even when imported via Suez, they are not competitive. Our loss of ground in the field of foodstuffs, textiles, clothing and domestic articles might be serious, but in other spheres such as electrical generating equipment, switchgear and cables, where British products enjoy a good reputation it might be possible to retain our present position or at any rate regain any ground lost later without undue difficulty.

⁽¹⁾ Not printed.

SECRET

6. From the point of view of the sterling area as a whole, Commonwealth countries might be able, in the new situation, to introduce certain of their products into Saudi Arabia on competitive terms, or to widen and strengthen the range of their existing exports. The most promising commodities would be bulk foodstuffs, canned and fresh food products, cotton piece goods, ready-made clothing, miscellaneous cheap consumer goods and cement. I doubt whether even the closure of the Suez Canal would lose the United States that market supremacy which she at present possesses in this country. Many American products are established and popular here and even at increased prices buyers would still be found in plenty. In the event of a more or less general Western boycott of the Canal there would almost certainly be a serious increase in imports from Communist countries, the competitive nature of which, assuming that their shipping were able to continue to use the Canal, would easily overcome such scruples as hard-headed Hejazi merchants might have here.

7. I am sending a copy of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassadors at Cairo and Washington, the Political Resident at Bahrain, the Political Representative with the Middle East Forces at Nicosia, the Governor of Aden, and the Commercial Relations and Exports Department of the Board of Trade. I am enclosing a further copy in case it may be of interest to the Commonwealth Relations Office for the information of High Commissioners in appropriate Commonwealth countries.

I have, &c.

R. W. PARKES.

2. Although the effect of a closure of the Suez Canal would be action for Saudi Arabia I see no reason to believe that the country would be short of all essential requirements. The matter of shipping round the Cape of Good Hope would have serious effects on the competitive position of British goods in a market where there are already far too many competitors that even when imported via Suez they are not competitive. (The loss of ground in the field of foodstuffs, clothing and domestic articles might be serious but in other spheres such as electrical generating equipment, aircraft and cars, where British products enjoy a good reputation it might be possible to retain our present position or at any rate regain any ground lost later without undue difficulty.)

3. In retrospect it now seems clear that Mr. Nehru had no desire to meet Colonel Nasser at this particular juncture. India's earlier, and doubtless largely instinctive, support for Egypt had been qualified by economic after-thoughts: emotion had yielded to self-interest: in any case the Anglo-French resort to the Security Council made mediation supererogatory. King Saud's attitude is harder to determine. I still think that ideally he would have preferred to have Mr. Nehru at his side if and when he confronted Colonel Nasser. But when Mr. Nehru failed to materialise as early as King Saud originally desired he

ES 10385/10

No. 36

MR. NEHRU'S VISIT TO SAUDI ARABIA

Mr. Parkes to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received October 17)

(No. 64. Confidential)

Jedda,

October 3, 1956.

On the 24th of September Pandit Nehru started an official four-day goodwill visit to Saudi Arabia. In the following paragraphs I have the honour to describe briefly the course of his visit and to offer some comments on its results.

2. Even before the visit was officially announced there were whispers in Jedda that when Mr. Nehru came to Saudi Arabia Colonel Nasser would be invited to meet him and King Saud; thereafter such rumours gained considerable currency in Egyptian and Indian newspapers. I believe such a meeting to have been part of King Saud's original design, certainly so far as the project for a visit in August was concerned; and I have explained what I understood to be the King's motives in my telegrams Nos. 250, 251 and 252 of the 19th of August. In the event, however, Mr. Nehru's visit followed closely on the meeting between King Saud and King Feisal of Iraq, and the hastily improvised conference between the Egyptian, Syrian and Saudi Arabian Heads of State, on both of which events I am reporting separately in my despatch No. 65 of to-day's date. The dates for the Indian Prime Minister's visit, as it ultimately materialised, were announced at the end of August. It was thus pure chance that it fell in the same week as King Saud's encounters with King Feisal and the two Presidents, neither of which had been arranged before the middle of September.

3. In retrospect it now seems clear that Mr. Nehru had no desire to meet Colonel Nasser at this particular juncture. India's earlier, and doubtless largely instinctive, support for Egypt had been qualified by economic after-thoughts: emotion had yielded to self-interest: in any case the Anglo-French resort to the Security Council made mediation supererogatory. King Saud's attitude is harder to determine. I still think that ideally he would have preferred to have Mr. Nehru at his side if and when he confronted Colonel Nasser. But when Mr. Nehru failed to materialise as early as King Saud originally desired he

vented his spleen by cocking a few minor long-range snooks at Colonel Nasser. Thus by the time Mr. Nehru actually came I think that King Saud was at least equally reluctant to meet the Egyptian President: and that Colonel Nasser's alarming insistence, as soon as the news of his daring meeting with King Feisal at Dammam broke, on coming to Saudi Arabia must have been a considerable embarrassment to the King. On balance therefore I am inclined to take at their face value Mr. Nehru's remarks to Her Majesty's High Commissioner in Delhi (reported in his telegram No. 1245 of the 23rd of September to the Commonwealth Relations Office); and I very much doubt whether King Saud was privy to Colonel Nasser's last-minute suggestion that he stay on to meet Mr. Nehru (Delhi telegram No. 1263 of the 27th of September). Nevertheless, whether by mischievous design or muddled Saudi planning, we were all kept guessing until the actual moment Colonel Nasser left Riyadh for Egypt. A bare two hours later Mr. Nehru arrived in Dhahran to start his official visit.

4. The programme arranged for the Indian Prime Minister was nothing unusual. At Dhahran he was briefly entertained by the Governor of the Eastern Province, Saud bin Jiluwi; went on the same evening, the 24th of September, to Riyadh; was met at the airport by Prince Feisal and dined that night with the King. The next day Mr. Nehru was shown such examples of progress in Saudi Arabia as the School for the King's Children, and attended the usual banquets. On the 26th of September, after a brisk early morning visit to the Agricultural Establishment at al Kharj, he took his leave of the King and came on by plane to Jedda. Here he was entertained by Prince Abdullah Feisal, Minister of the Interior, who gave a large banquet for him the same evening. On the following day Mr. Nehru flew to Dhahran once more, was lunched and dined by the Amir Saud bin Jiluwi, saw something of the working of Aramco and, on the morning of the 28th of September, boarded a plane to return to India.

5. So much for the official trappings of the visit: there was of course more to it

than this. In Riyadh Mr. Nehru had two long discussions, the first with King Saud alone and the second with Prince Feisal also present. The text of the joint communiqué which followed these meetings is enclosed with my Chancery letter 1035/56 of the 1st of October. It is a moderately worded document and, apart from the now familiar reference to Bandung principles, the only topic specifically mentioned is the Suez Canal. The observations here are not unexpected and, for the leaders of two Asian States, not unreasonable. The dispute cannot be settled by denying Egypt's rights of sovereignty, avers the communiqué; but it should be possible to reach a solution by negotiation whilst respecting these rights, and also the interests of other Powers in the open and unconditional use of the Canal as a waterway; and political and economic pressures are naturally deplored. Mr. Nehru took much the same line in a speech he delivered at a mammoth reception in Jedda organised by the Indian community. The text of this speech is also enclosed with my Chancery letter quoted above. The Saudi report, however, of a similar speech made by Mr. Nehru at the municipality dinner in Riyadh on the 25th of September quotes him as saying that the Canal is an inseparable part of Egypt, and that the Indian and Saudi Arabian Governments will support and stand by Egypt in her struggle. But this rather more forthright sentiment may be nothing more than an editorial gloss.

6. One topic raised by King Saud was the present position of India's 40 million Muslims. Shortly before Mr. Nehru's visit members of the Pakistan Awami and Muslim Leagues had appealed to King Saud to urge the Indian Prime Minister to check the present alleged persecution of Indian Muslims. Although the subject is not mentioned in the communiqué Mecca Radio announced, after Mr. Nehru's departure, that King Saud had sought an assurance about the treatment of Muslims in India. In return Mr. Nehru had delivered himself of his standard reply, namely, that India did not countenance religious or racial discrimination and that Indian Muslims were treated on a basis of complete equality with all other elements of her population.

7. Whilst in Dhahran Mr. Nehru found time for a two-hour conversation with Mr. Davis, Chairman of the Board of Aramco and a considerable expert on oil politics. In the course of this interview I understand that he was firmly told, not only of the less

obvious consequences a worsening of the Canal situation might have on world oil traffic, but also of the real danger that Western oil interests, apprehending that the sanctity of contracts signed with Middle Eastern countries had now been destroyed, might cease to invest in the area altogether. Mr. Nehru also learnt, apparently for the first time, something of the difficulties with which Lebanese greed has recently confronted Tapline and the Iraq Petroleum Company. The infectious nature of successful Arab piracy was thus forcibly brought home to the Indian Prime Minister who, I trust, will now do some hard thinking on the possible fate of an irresponsible Middle East deprived of Western investment and technicians.

8. The visit was certainly salutary in one respect for Saudi Arabia. Before his arrival Mr. Nehru had received a fulsome welcome from the Saudi press, which described him as a sort of Asian David who had successfully carried through a nationalist policy in the teeth of the Western Goliath. "His voice was heard above that of the imperialists, and he forced them to respect him" said Al Bilad al Saudiya on the 25th of September. Mr. Nehru not unnaturally found it difficult to live up to this somewhat extravagant image of himself in his public statements. India, he emphasised, had gained her independence by friendly agreement. "We do not want to talk about the past, but to look forward to the future; we bear no ill will towards Britain . . . we are tied to Britain in a relation of friendship and cordiality." This refusal to court cheap nationalist popularity at the expense of the facts reflects credit on Mr. Nehru's integrity; and by the end of the visit the Indian Prime Minister's peace themes had temporarily ousted the familiar sins of "imperialism" from the local press and radio.

9. Mr. Nehru thus advertised with effect his personality and credo in a part of the world where knowledge of either is scanty. Their impact cannot yet be gauged but I would judge that, in varying degrees, King Saud and his people are now considerably more conscious of their country's place in the Bandung scheme of things than before. Whilst Colonel Nasser is still widely regarded as a major and praiseworthy exponent of Bandung principles, such increased awareness on the part of Saudi Arabia can only make it more difficult for King Saud to pursue a realistic policy, in

accord with what he recognises to be his own interests.

10. In undertaking this goodwill mission at a time not particularly convenient to himself Mr. Nehru was, I suspect, largely actuated by a desire to counteract as best he could the effect of Mr. Mohammed Ali's visit to Saudi Arabia some two months earlier. The increasing influence of Pakistan in this strategic peninsula could not but have been disquieting to India; and the weakness of the Indian mission in Jedda, compared with its incomparably more formidable Pakistan counterpart, needed serious attention. Thus, apart from showing the flag and impressing his personality—with conspicuous success—on a somewhat indifferent Saudi Arabia, Mr. Nehru left behind him a Deputy-Secretary of his External Affairs Department with urgent instructions to inject new life into a moribund legation. I understand that the Indian Minister will shortly be installed in a sumptuous new residence; and that reinforcements in the shape of a career

First Secretary and Vice-Consul are now on their way. Rumour has it, too, that Mr. Kidwai may soon find himself an ambassador. Mr. Nehru's emphasis in his public statements on India's economic interest in Saudi Arabia will also doubtless have its repercussions in due course. One of the first fruits, I gather, is to be an agreement, negotiated by one of the Minor Hyderabad Nawabs representing the Birla interests, whereby with 41 per cent. American capital and the remainder coming from Saudi and Indian sources, India builds a fleet of merchant ships, to operate under the Saudi flag and carry wheat from North America in exchange for manganese from India.

11. I am copying this despatch to the United Kingdom High Commissioners in Delhi and Karachi, to Her Majesty's Representatives in Cairo, Damascus and Bagdad, to the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf at Bahrain and to the Political Representative with the Middle East Forces at Nicosia.

I have, &c.

R. W. PARKES.

ES 1021/102

No. 37

VISITS TO SAUDI ARABIA OF THE KING OF IRAQ AND THE PRESIDENTS OF EGYPT AND SYRIA

Mr. Parkes to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received October 17)

(No. 65. Confidential)
Sir,

Jedda,
October 3, 1956.

On the 20th of September King Feisal of Iraq and King Saud met briefly at Dammam, the Saudi Arabian port on the Persian Gulf. Two days later Colonel Nasser and President Kuwatly of Syria hastened to this country to confer with King Saud. Thus in the space of a few eventful days public expression was given first, and implicitly, to King Saud's uneasiness about Colonel Nasser's adventure with the Suez Canal; second, and explicitly, to his continuing alliance with Egypt. In this despatch I propose to summarise the course of both meetings and to attempt a preliminary estimate—it is still too early to dogmatise—of the effect they may have had on Arab unity and more particularly on this country's changing political alignment.

2. Well before Colonel Nasser's seizure of the Suez Canal it was fairly clear that all was not well with the Saudi-Egyptian alliance. The King's growing distrust of Egyptian intentions in Saudi Arabia, where their agents were busily and almost arrogantly at work, and his concern at Egypt's increasing association with the Communist bloc, finally led him in June of this year to put out tentative feelers towards Iraq. Ways of responding to this Saudi approach were debated in Bagdad and London over the next two months; and meanwhile, with Egypt's nationalisation of the Suez Canal Company, the need for, and feasibility of, detaching King Saud from his Egyptian alliance alike increased. The ground was accordingly prepared and eventually, on the 26th of August, Amir Zaid, the senior member of the Hashemite family, paid a short visit to King Saud in Riyadh. The King's cordial reception of the Amir and his outspoken criticism of Colonel Nasser encouraged exploitation of these tentative beginnings. Nuri Said's aims, as set out in Bagdad telegram No. 886 of the 14th of August, were threefold: renewal of contact between the two Royal Houses, discussion of the danger to the Arab world inherent in Colonel Nasser's policy and consideration of possible joint

action against Middle East Communists, notably in Syria. By now it looked as if all three aims might be attainable: arrangements for a meeting between the two Kings were accordingly completed in Riyadh by Sheikh Abdullah Bakr and Sheikh Abdullah Damaluji; and on the 20th of September King Feisal duly arrived at Dammam in his yacht.

3. At one stage it seemed possible that Prince Abdulillah might accompany King Feisal. This was regarded as significant in Jedda circles since the Crown Prince is widely recognised as the key figure in any Saudi-Iraqi rapprochement. On the 18th of September Amir Abdullah bin Abdur Rahman, King Saud's chief adviser and almost certainly one of the chief opponents of such a rapprochement, flew from Riyadh to Jedda. I am inclined to think that he had been instructed by King Saud to impress on Prince Feisal, who also has misgivings about Iraq, that his presence would be essential to balance that of the Iraqi Crown Prince. Prince Feisal was thus present at the Dammam meeting, but not so Amir Abdullah who, his mission discharged, remained in Taif.

4. The course of the meeting was simple enough: visits were exchanged between the yacht and the palace at Dammam where lunch and dinner were also taken (see my Chancery letter 1033/56 of the 24th of September). The atmosphere was friendly throughout and the Saudis did not hesitate to give public expression to their satisfaction at the meeting (see, for instance, the enclosure to my Chancery letter 1036/56 of the 30th of September). Some account of the discussions that took place has already been given in Bagdad telegram No. 1085 and my telegram No. 303, both of the 23rd of September. It is disappointing that no practical arrangements materialised for joint action to check Communist penetration in the Middle East. But in leaving this question for discussion with Prince Feisal and Sheikh Yusuf Yasin King Saud was, I think, merely following his usual practice rather than trying to temporise. It is something—indeed a great deal—that he has met King

Feisal, has recognised the common interests which they share, and that the two Governments are later to give expression to their new-found community in a joint communiqué. Nevertheless the fact remains that even in these preliminary stages King Saud is meeting with considerable opposition from his deplorable advisers.

5. It may well have been, as Nuri Said thinks, that one of these "wicked men," Sheikh Yusuf Yasin, was instrumental in bringing about the subsequent meeting between King Saud, Colonel Nasser and President Kuwatly. It had indeed struck me as ominous that Sheikh Yusuf should have been at pains to fly, at extremely short notice, from Cairo to Dammam to attend the meeting with King Feisal. Whether or not he discussed the possible implications of this meeting with Colonel Nasser before leaving Cairo I cannot say. It would not have been impossible since news of the Saud-Feisal meeting, for so long a well-kept secret, leaked out over Jordan radio two days before. However that may be, Colonel Nasser took prompt action to call his satellite to heel and reassure himself of Saudi support. I understand that he first sent a telegram suggesting an urgent meeting with King Saud. When this telegram remained unanswered for twenty-four hours he rang up President Kuwatly, and the two together then telephoned to King Saud personally. In such circumstances the King could hardly refuse: I hear he was relieved to be thus spared a tête-à-tête with the Egyptian President: and he duly met his two treaty allies on the 22nd of September.

6. I have every sympathy with those press correspondents who, during the next few days, were at the mercy of "conflicting reports" and "the unpredictability of Colonel Nasser's movements." There were times indeed when no one in Jedda knew what was going on. On the day of Colonel Nasser's (secret) arrival all the self-important, and slightly ridiculous, members of the Egyptian Embassy were discovered perspiring at the airport, in the company of brass bands, saluting guns, guards of honour, local notables, a scout troop and eleven overweight Egyptian bodyguards—all waiting for a colonel who never arrived. This flurry was repeated two days later when Colonel Nasser was expected to touch down in Jedda on his return to Cairo. On this second occasion Prince Abdullah Feisal was present: Heads of Mission were

hastily summoned (I did not go myself): but after a prolonged and uncomfortable wait in the midday heat the entire assembly was sent empty away once again, wondering ruefully whether good manners were necessarily incompatible with security precautions—or downright unpredictability.

7. Discussions took place shortly after Colonel Nasser's arrival at Dhahran. That evening, the 22nd of September, there was a banquet at the palace in Dammam and on the following day the three Heads of State flew to Riyadh where an even larger reception was given. Wherever Colonel Nasser went or, in the case of Jedda, was expected to go, there were large and enthusiastic crowds; and there is now no doubt that even in Saudi Arabia he has caught the imagination of the people. In their propaganda treatment of the enthusiasm displayed the Saudis have tried to deflect the plaudits on to King Saud—"this most magnificent display of Arabism: history will record how His Majesty King Saud has worked to bring together the Arab nations and to unite them in glory and dignity"—but it fools no one. The colonel was the hero, not the King; and even though Egyptian cheerleaders were noticed in action at both Dhahran and Riyadh airports such a reception has never before been seen in Saudi Arabia. The crowd indeed broke through the cordon of guards at Riyadh and, despite the personal intervention of Prince Feisal, threatened to engulf the whole party. King Saud's tribal bodyguard, the Khuwiya, was then unleashed and laid about them with such enthusiasm that the runway was littered with hundreds of sandals involuntarily shed by the crowd of over 5,000, which fled in complete panic.

8. It is particularly difficult to discover what exactly was said by the three Heads of State in Dammam and Riyadh. The joint communiqué forwarded with my Chancery letter No. 1036/56 of the 30th of September is as unrevealing as it is platitudinous. All that I have been able to piece together is contained in my telegrams Nos. 317 and 318 of the 1st and 2nd of October respectively; and Damascus telegram No. 593 also sheds some rather indistinct light. What I find distinctly disquieting is the extent to which King Saud apparently accepted the comforting, if unconvincing, assurances served up to him by the two Presidents; and the ease with which he seems to have allowed his genuine anxiety over Communist penetration of Egypt and Syria, and the dangers

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inherent in the Suez Canal crisis, to be deflected. That he is simple and weak we have always known: but in recent months a prevailing urgency seemed to have concentrated such energies as heavy harem preoccupation leave him. It looked therefore as if for once he was prepared to assert himself and carry through a policy of enlightened self-interest in the face of the obstruction and warnings of his unreliable counsellors. Does his uninspired performance at the second Big Three Conference (a specious fiction to disguise the urgency with which the two Presidents felt obliged to seek clarification of his attitude) represent outright surrender, or the diplomacy of weakness? In my view the truth lies somewhere between the two, but time alone will show.

9. It will be remembered that King Saud told Prince Zaid specifically that he could not afford an open breach with Colonel Nasser, at any rate until his new understanding with Iraq was complete (Bagdad telegram No. 951 of the 29th of August). At the same time, *qua* Arab host, it would have been supremely distasteful to him to have any unpleasantness with his two uninvited but exalted guests, however much the warmth of Colonel Nasser's reception in Saudi Arabia may have affronted his considerable vanity. Yet I have detected an alarming echo of the last speaker in such accounts as have reached me of his subsequent conversations; and both Colonel Nasser and Pandit Nehru are persuasive talkers. I think, therefore, that in our future reckoning it would be wise to take full account of this weakness, as well as of the warped and tortuous advice that his xenophobic counsellors are certain to give him.

10. On balance I would judge that King Saud's desire to reach a full understanding with Iraq remains intact, but that it is a delicate plant unlikely to thrive until such time as the Iraqi Crown Prince Abdulillah can bring himself to forget the past and make some personal gesture of goodwill. This, I am sure, will be the touchstone the King's advisers will employ; and only when they judge further resistance to be fruitless will their overt or covert opposition to Saudi-Iraqi rapprochement be withdrawn. We know that King Saud's uncle and influential Chief Adviser, Prince Abdullah, takes a strong pro-Egyptian line (Bagdad telegram No. 1049 of the 15th of September); and that Prince Feisal and Sheikh

Yusuf Yasin find it convenient to deny the existence of Communism in Syria (Bagdad telegram No. 1085 of the 23rd of September). Their opposition is not necessarily perverse: it may well stem from their ingrained suspicion of Hashemite expansionism and a reluctance to see, in their view, Saudi Arabia do the Hashemites' work for them in Syria. However this may be, I think that, although King Saud doubtless passed off his meeting with King Feisal as an effort to achieve greater Arab unity, and possibly to wean Iraq away from the pact to which her capital has given the name, the immediate result of the "Big Three" Conference has probably been to strengthen the creaking Cairo-Damascus-Riyadh axis. The sensitivity of King Saud's allies to any deviationism in the direction of Iraq has been amply demonstrated, and I imagine Colonel Nasser and Shukri Kuwatly are both reasonably satisfied with the results of their hasty visit.

11. I doubt, however, whether King Saud's thinking on the Suez issue has been appreciably altered by the advent of the two Presidents. As his preliminary irritation with Colonel Nasser's unilateral action began to wear off the pull of Arab solidarity began to assert itself. King Saud's initial desire to have Colonel Nasser accept a solution deleterious to his prestige lessened proportionately, and by the time of the visit his overriding preoccupation was to see a peaceful settlement. Mr. Nehru's subsequent insistence that the only worthwhile victory was one in which neither side lost thus merely confirmed the King's thinking, which he is now able to express in appropriate Bandung verbiage.

12. It now remains to us to recover such ground as has been lost. The publication of the Joint Saudi-Iraqi Communiqué, and the announcement that Ambassadors are to be exchanged, will serve temporarily to regain some of the initiative; and the problems of their own countries should immobilise the Egyptian and Syrian Presidents for some time to come at any rate. Meanwhile, I think it will be important to see that suitable facts demonstrating the spread of Communism in the Levant and Egypt, and particularly Syria, reach not only King Saud but his Advisers as well in a constant flow, by whatever channels may be open to us. The menace of Communism is the one common factor against which there is no potential sales resistance in Riyadh, though there may well

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be considerable ignorance. With his not inconsiderable nest egg almost exclusively invested in Latakia even Yusuf Yasin can scarcely remain complacent about the country's future should he be convinced that Syria is in serious danger of turning Communist; and Prince Feisal and other influential counsellors with heavy investments in Egypt could presumably be made correspondingly uneasy. I have already suggested one mode of attack here to the

Regional Information Office in Beirut, and there must be many more.

13. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives in Bagdad, Cairo, Damascus and Washington, the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf at Bahrain, the Political Representative with the Middle East Forces at Nicosia and to the Governor of Aden.

I have, &c.

R. W. PARKES.

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ES 1051/146

No. 38

CONVERSATION IN NEW YORK BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF
STATE AND AZZAM PASHA ON OCTOBER 14, 1956

Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Mr. Parkes (Jedda)

(No. 90. Confidential)
Sir,

Foreign Office,
October 19, 1956.

Azzam Pasha called on me in New York on October 14.

2. He began by speaking of King Saud's position in the Middle East. He said the King considered that Nasser had gambled over the Suez Canal. His action might lead him to war with the United Kingdom and the King saw that his loyalty to a fellow Arab would then clash with his desire for friendship with Great Britain. That was the reason why he had reacted coolly to Nasser's action. The King welcomed the improved relations with the Iraqi Royal Family. Azzam thought it important that this should appear to be spontaneous. It would be all right of its purpose appeared to be the presentation of a common front against Communism. But it should not appear to serve British designs in the Middle East.

3. Most of the conversation was of course about Buraimi. Azzam developed the Saudi argument along familiar lines. Her Majesty's Government had broken the arbitration agreement. There had been no real bribery. Any sums which had been paid were only in accordance with local custom. If the sums were large that was only because the Saudis could afford to be generous. And if there had been any payment to Shaikh Zaid at Buraimi, it was made to him in connexion with a proposition put to him as a representative of the Ruler of the area. It was intended that he should consult the Ruler, Shaikh Shakbut. The littoral Shaikhdoms, and particularly Muscat, owed their existence to British protection. The Omanis would be loyal to the Imam and repudiate the Sultan if he had not British support. The Saudi family controlled Buraimi in the last century.

4. In reply I emphasised our obligations to the Rulers under our protection, and said that the trouble in Buraimi had been begun by the Saudis when they sent Turki there. Until then, the Sultan of Muscat and the Shaikh of Abu Dhabi had controlled Buraimi for many years. As at one stage Azzam had referred to "thousands of refugees" from Buraimi who should be allowed to return, I said I thought the number of refugees was only about 300. To this he said that this might be the figure of those who came from Buraimi itself and who were still receiving financial assistance from King Saud but he thought that the total number of refugees from Buraimi, including those of Omani origin, ran into thousands.

5. I said I was sure that it would be easier to settle the Buraimi question when friendly relations had been firmly established between Her Majesty's Government and the King, similar to those which we had with Iraq. To attempt to solve the Buraimi question now would hinder those relations; if the Buraimi question were put at the end of the road by the time we arrived there it would present no difficulty. Already the King's reassessment of Nasser and the stopping of the supply of Saudi money in Syria and Lebanon were helpful. Azzam agreed with this suggestion but thought that the present exchanges we were having with the Saudi Government would not succeed in postponing the Buraimi issue. It would be best if we could settle the problem either by division, by neutralisation of the area, or by the recognition of different tribal allegiances in the area. But if this was not possible, he made an urgent plea for a new arbitration, which could be arranged so that it would take a long time and thus shelve the issue and so achieve what I had suggested. He mentioned five years. I promised to consider all that he had said, but told him that I adhered to my view that to raise the Buraimi issue was the best way to prevent Anglo-Saudi friendship developing.

6. I am sending copies of this despatch to the Political Resident in Bahrain, and to the Head of the Political Office with Middle East Forces.

I am, &c.

SELWYN LLOYD.

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ES 1052/3

No. 39 (1)

OFFICIAL COMMUNIQUÉS BY SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT
ABOUT RUPTURE OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE
UNITED KINGDOM AND FRANCE AND THE DENIAL OF OIL TO
THOSE COUNTRIES

Mr. Parkes to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received November 6)

(No. 387)
(Telegraphic)

Jedda,
November 6, 1956.

Head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to-day handed me the following official communiqué:—

"In view of the flagrant aggression made by England and France against the sister Egypt without justification whatever, while she is the victim of Israel aggression, the Saudi Arabian Government have issued instructions to the competent authorities to stop loading and supplying all British and French ships, and also other ships proceeding with cargo to the said two countries, with all Saudi oil products."

ES 1052/4

No. 39 (2)

Mr. Parkes to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received November 6)

(No. 388)
(Telegraphic)

Jedda,
November 6, 1956.

At 1115 hours on November 6 the Head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs handed me the following official communiqué:—

"In view of the armed aggression made by the Governments of Britain and France against sister Egypt, herself the object of aggression by Israel, and in view of the refusal by the said two Governments to accept the cease-fire resolution of the United Nations, and their persistence without justification in their aggression, His Majesty's Government have resolved to break their diplomatic relations with the said two Governments with effect from the date of communications."

2. The Head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs assured me of all facilities in arranging for the departure of Embassy personnel or such members of the British Community as might wish to leave Saudi Arabia. No time-limit has been set for leaving.

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APPENDIX

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

ES 1902/1

No. 40

SAUDI ARABIA: HEADS OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

Mr. Parkes to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received July 11)

(No. 47. Confidential)
Sir,

Jedda,
July 1, 1956.

I have the honour to send you herewith my annual report on the Heads of Foreign Missions in Saudi Arabia.

I have, &c.

R. W. PARKES.

Enclosure

Afghanistan

Faiz Mohammed Zekria, Ambassador.

Presented his credentials on the 7th of August, 1955. Had a long experience of Government service in Afghanistan (including the post of Foreign Minister in 1929 at the age of 30) before being appointed Ambassador to Turkey in 1938 and to the United Kingdom in 1948. Was recalled to Kabul the following year in connection with the Afghan case for "Pathanistan," of which he is a voluble advocate. Retired after a year as Minister of Education, but came out of retirement to take up his present appointment and spend his declining years "making his soul" in the Holy Places. When Foreign Minister in Kabul in 1936-38 had the reputation of being an amiable buffoon. Has not developed in the intervening years. Is personally most friendly, and has the good sense to avoid the subject of Pushtunistan with those familiar with the facts of life on what used to be the North-West Frontier.

Speaks fluent English, French and Turkish, also some Russian.

Belgium

Georges C. Puttevels, Chargé d'Affaires *en titre*.

Presented his letter of appointment on the 10th of April, 1955, as first Head of the newly established Belgian Legation. Was formerly in the Foreign Ministry in Brussels; this is his first post abroad.

A friendly and co-operative colleague who looks to us for a fair amount of advice on local affairs. Concentrates rightly on promoting his country's growing commercial interests here and is somewhat at sea in Saudi political affairs, though he shows an intelligent interest in them.

Speaks good English, but his German wife—a shy woman preoccupied with looking after her children's health in the severe climate of Jedda—speaks only French and German.

China (Nationalist)

Wang Shih Ming, Consul.

Arrived in Jedda in March 1956 from Cairo, where he was Second Secretary of the then Chinese Nationalist Embassy, but has not yet been granted

King Saud's exequatur. Saudi acceptance of him seems to have been merely a gesture by the King to demonstrate to the Americans that he remains opposed to any relations with Communist Powers.

Wang is an unimpressive little man, but not unintelligent. His sole work in Jedda appears to be the promotion of Formosan trade. He speaks English and Arabic.

Egypt

Dr. Abdul Wahab Azzam, Ambassador.

Presented his credentials on the 11th of March, 1955. Formerly Ambassador to Pakistan, for which country he has considerable affection.

A quiet and distinguished man of letters who on his own admission is more at home among books than office files. Was educated partly in London at the School of Oriental Studies and has a genuine regard for British institutions. Is at the same time an Orthodox Moslem highly respected among the Saudis. There is reason to believe that the basic policy of the Embassy is directed by the First Secretary, a repulsive colonel who presumably receives his orders direct from the Council of the Revolution. Dr. Azzam may well be a mere figure-head; he certainly gives the impression of taking very little interest in his work.

Speaks good Persian, Urdu, Turkish and French besides English.

Ethiopia

Abdulla al-Madani, Consul-General.

Appointed on the 26th of March, 1956. An amiable Eritrean Moslem of little personality. Speaks no foreign language other than Arabic.

Finland

Said Binzagr (Saudi Arabian), Honorary Consul.

Appointed on the 7th of September, 1950. A local merchant of very good repute. Pleasant, trustworthy and friendly towards Britain. Speaks only Arabic.

France

Georges Cassin, Ambassador.

Presented his credentials on the 21st of March, 1956. Worked his way up through the lower branch of the French Foreign Service, serving in the Middle East as Consular Officer and Secrétaire-Interprète. Was on the wartime Free French Mission to the Levant, and then at the Quai d'Orsay from 1946 to 1948 as a member of the *cabinet* of the Under-Secretary of State for Moslem Affairs. Served afterwards in Moscow and then as Minister to Albania.

A small, precise man of suspiciously dark complexion. Is friendly and co-operative and knows his Middle East well.

Speaks fair English besides some Arabic, Persian and Turkish.

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Germany (Federal Republic)

Oswald, Freiherr von Richthofen, Minister.
Presented his credentials on the 12th of October, 1955, as the first post-war German representative to Saudi Arabia. Is a nephew of the First World War air ace of the same name. A career diplomat, he served for eight years during the Nazi era (and was Attaché in Vienna at the time of the Anschluss) but took no active part in undesirable activities. After serving from 1951 to 1954 as Counsellor in Dublin he returned to Bonn in charge of British and Commonwealth affairs at the Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

A pleasant, civilised colleague with clear-cut and well reasoned views. Is proud of the fact that an ancestor of his commanded the Hanovarian artillery at the Battle of Waterloo and received a knighthood. Well served by a Counsellor and Commercial Attaché, both of whom speak fluent Arabic.

Speaks excellent English and French himself and fair Dutch, being now married for the second time to a personable Dutch woman, many years his junior, with whom, as an employee of the Netherlands Mission in Dublin, he is understood to have had a somewhat notorious liaison.

Greece

Yusuf Mahmoud Zahid, Honorary Consul.
Granted exequatur on the 10th of May, 1955. A local merchant of good standing.

Indonesia

The Legation is temporarily in charge of a young Third Secretary pending the appointment of a new Minister.

Iraq

Munir Rashid, Chargé d'Affaires *ad interim*.
With the departure of the first Iraqi Minister to reside in Jedda, the Iraqi Government have apparently decided to revert to their earlier system of appointing temporary Chargés d'Affaires drawn from the staff of the Iraqi Embassy in Cairo. Munir Rashid is the first of the new series and was appointed to Jedda on the 27th of March, 1956. He has served exclusively in the Middle East, latterly as Counsellor, and is friendly towards Britain. He is not a man of any great intelligence but can be relied upon to report accurately and to discuss local affairs reasonably well. Is keen on the Bagdad Pact and laudably anxious to demonstrate solidarity with his Pact colleagues.

Speaks excellent English and good French and Turkish. Recently married to an attractive Egyptian who is bitterly anti-Nasser. Her brother-in-law, Ghazaly Pasha, was Governor of Cairo and very helpful to us in that capacity. He was imprisoned by the Revolutionary Junta but released after a few months.

Italy

Alberto Brugnoli, Minister.
Presented his credentials on the 4th of September, 1955. A middle-aged career diplomat who served for a spell in London. Is precious but amusing. Dislikes Jedda but regards it as the penalty of promotion. A friendly and co-operative colleague, if rather long-winded.

Speaks excellent English and French.

Jordan

Yaqub al-Taji Farouqi, Chargé d'Affaires *ad interim*.

An earnest but well meaning young Second Secretary who is holding the Legation temporarily pending the appointment of a new Chargé d'Affaires

en titre. Served for several years in London and has an undisguised admiration for things British. A friendly and usefully informative colleague who speaks excellent English.

Lebanon

Hussein el-Jisr, Ambassador.
Presented new credentials on the 21st of March, 1956, on the elevation of his Mission to the status of Embassy. Is the son of the late Mohammed Jisr who played an important part in the political life of the Lebanon during the early years of the French mandate. Is intelligent and shrewd and fits into Western society easily. My French colleague finds him a useful source of information on local affairs. Speaks fluent French, fair Turkish and scanty English.

Netherlands

Dirk N. Hooykaas, Honorary Consul.
Appointed on the 12th of October, 1955, but was not granted Saudi exequatur until six months later. Is manager of the Netherlands Trading Society's bank in Jedda.

A large Dutchman, quiet and friendly and only recently married (in his forties). Was for many years in Indonesia with his bank. Speaks good English, French and German and is a not unintelligent observer of the Saudi scene.

Persia

Mahmoud Salahi, Ambassador.
Presented his credentials on the 1st of February, 1956. Served in Berlin during part of the war and was subsequently Ambassador in Bagdad and Kabul. Is friendly enough but unintelligent and abnormally tactless. Irritates his colleagues by laying down the law about their Persian carpets, on which subject he is totally ignorant. Is a very poor advertisement for the Bagdad Pact and cuts little ice with the Saudis. Possesses a withered and depressed looking wife who makes only rare appearances.

Speaks halting French, some Arabic and a very little English. Fortunately quite a few of his colleagues know Persian.

Siam

Ekachai Raktiprakon, Acting Consul-General.
Appointed on the 22nd of July, 1953. Formerly a Consular Officer in several Far Eastern posts. His only work here is connected with the several hundred Siamese pilgrims and resident students in Mecca.

An inoffensive little man who makes painful efforts to please. Speaks English that might be intelligible were it not for his peculiar accent.

Sudan

Abu Shura, Chargé d'Affaires *ad interim*.
Was pilgrimage commissioner until the establishment of the Sudan Diplomatic Mission in Jedda. Friendly enough on the surface but, I suspect, a snake. Looks to the Egyptian Embassy for guidance, has an Egyptian for his No. 2 (and resident) wife, and was formerly Assistant Sudan Agent in Cairo. Speaks fluent English.

Syria

Abdul Hadi Darkazalli, Chargé d'Affaires *ad interim*.
Has been in charge of the Embassy since September 1955, when the Ambassador went "on leave." The latter, Omar Bahaudin al-Amiri, an ardent member of the Moslem Brotherhood, was never at ease in Saudi Arabia.

Darkazalli is a smooth young man with an inflated opinion of himself. Expresses jingoist opinions in fluent French and fair English.

Turkey

Kemal Aziz Payman, Minister.
Presented his credentials on the 10th of November, 1952. An undistinguished little man, over anxious to identify himself with his Western colleagues. Outspokenly scathing about Saudi Arabia and its rulers. Never visits Mecca or Medina or exploits his one advantage, Islam. Relays bazaar gossip under pledge of secrecy and appears to have neither judgment nor intelligence. An unworthy representative of Turkey and a very disappointing Pact colleague. Has the reputation of never having entertained any of his colleagues to a meal since the day he arrived in Jedda, which he would like to leave at the earliest opportunity.

Speaks fluent French and German, but only a few words of English.

United States

George Wadsworth, Ambassador.
Presented his credentials on the 9th of January, 1954. Is also accredited to the Yemen. A career diplomat who has seen wide service, latterly in the Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Turkey and Czechoslovakia. Mr. Wadsworth is now in his 64th year and shows every sign of it. He loves life in Jedda, which appeals to his ego, and will be prised out of it with difficulty I suspect. Is a good Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and an excellent host on his golf course, bridge or dinner table. Drives his staff mad by mills of God methods and keeping Churchillian hours. Is, I think, a good friend of Britain at heart but full co-operation with him is rendered difficult both by his chronic volubility and his gullibility in matters Saudi. Some of his misplaced admiration for King Saud undoubtedly derives from snobbery. Is intelligible in rather kitchen Arabic and speaks good American-French.

CHAPTER III.—THE YEMEN

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE

EM 1015/4

No. 41

FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF THE YEMEN

Mr. Monteith to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received February 1)(No. 4. Confidential)
Sir,

Taiz,

January 19, 1956.

I have the honour to submit my first impressions of the Yemen. I regret that I have waited nearly five months before recording them, but the Yemen is a confusing country and difficult to know, and I still feel considerable doubt about the worth of these impressions.

2. The first impressions of any visitor to the Yemen—and on this I have no doubts—must be the great beauty of the scenery and the admirable climate in the hills. The spectacular hills with villages perched right up the sides and the valleys which, even at this season, are surprisingly green, are, I must confess, not what I had expected in any part of Arabia. And the climate is a remarkable and most welcome contrast to the damp heat of Aden and the coastal plain.

3. This climate combines with fertile, though stony, ground to make agriculture easy. The long rainy season makes times of cultivation unimportant, and it is common to see crops being sown, ripening and being reaped in adjoining fields. The variety of crops is wide; maize, wheat, barley, potatoes, cotton and coffee all grow well, as do tomatoes and many other vegetables. I had expected bananas, citrus, pawpaws, mangoes and other tropical fruits, but to find also fruits like grapes in abundance and peaches, and flowers like roses, carnations and violets was something of a surprise. As far as nature is concerned, the name of Arabia Felix is well deserved.

4. In other ways the country is not so happy. It is most interesting to an outsider to see an Arab country practically untouched by the West, and to see an absolute monarchy in action; quite clearly, however, the Yemen is not such a pleasant place for the Yemenis. I do not think I have spoken to any Yemeni, in circumstances in which he could speak freely, who has not complained about conditions in this country. The peasants complain of the oppressive taxation, and although officially moderate it is heavy by any standards by the time the various tax-gatherers have taken their rake-off; the soldiers complain of their miserable pay, though they generally appear to find convenient methods to supplement it in a country where bribery is normal; the *intelligentsia* complain of the absence of any form of consultative government; and all complain of the lack of material progress.

5. There is substance in all these complaints, and the adulation of the Imam in the local press in no way reflects public opinion; two of the papers are Government-owned, and the editor of the third has to watch his step very carefully. It would be absurd to suggest, as do the woolly-minded Free Yemenis, that democracy should immediately be introduced or to hope, as they do, that it would cure all the ills of the country; but some form of devolution of authority would certainly be an advance. Nominally there are now plenty of Ministers, but it is difficult to believe that the title means anything as the Imam continues to keep even the smallest decisions to himself; and that is more than an oldish man in indifferent health can manage. And one must wonder whether liaison is all that it might be when, on occasions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has to send a telegram to the Palace, which stands only thirty yards away.

6. The lack of material progress is not so immediately obvious. The important visitor to Taiz will be proudly shown the new hospital, the new school, the waterworks and the electric light plant. There is a good deal of misleading propaganda in this. The hospital certainly boasts equipment of which many

English hospitals might be proud, even though it often lacks common drugs and disinfectants; but it may be doubted whether a showy start at the top is of nearly so much value as would be some unspectacular public health work in a country where 80 or 90 per cent. of the population suffer from tuberculosis, syphilis or bilharzia. Some progress has certainly been made in education but, although the standard of bare literacy is surprisingly high, the level of further education is lower, I imagine, than in any other Arab State. An important visitor arriving in Taiz by air might also be impressed by the tarmac road from the airport to the Imam's Palace, without realising that, with one exception, the other roads in the Yemen are abominable even by the standards of the Middle East. Material progress has only begun to scratch the surface.

7. Altogether in practically all fields, the Yemen remains a striking contrast to those Arab countries which have been more influenced by the West, and a glance at the Yemen might persuade other Arabs that that influence has not been quite as bad as they sometimes suggest.

8. The Yemen has, of course, a tradition of isolation and xenophobia stretching back long before the West began to influence the Middle East. It is difficult to guess how much xenophobia there is now among these good-mannered people, but I am inclined to think that it must be decreasing. That is understandable; Yemenis have for some time gone abroad to seek their fortunes or taken jobs as sailors; more recently the growth of Arab nationalism, the wireless, the sudden wealth of Saudi Arabia and the revolution in Egypt must all have combined to make them wonder whether they have not something to learn from the outside world. The Imam is clearly highly suspicious of other countries, including even some members of the Arab League; that also is understandable, for the more experience Yemenis as a whole have of the outside world, the less tenable will his own position as absolute ruler become. This suspicion is reflected in the official attitude to foreigners in the country; foreigners are extremely carefully watched, they have to obtain travel passes for almost any journey (and the number of check-points on the roads gives the impression of a police State, though these checks are probably more for customs purposes than to control the movements of Yemenis) and their social contact with Yemeni officials is negligible. On the other hand, the ordinary people whom I meet out walking are almost invariably friendly, curious and willing to gossip, and generally agree that it is rather a good thing to be British.

9. Accurate information is difficult to obtain. Officials are reticent, the press and radio are mainly concerned with praising the Imam, and the ordinary man is ill-informed. These impressions therefore may not be very accurate.

10. In conclusion, my main impression after these few months is that the Yemen is a country of considerable possibilities, but that few of these possibilities will be realised unless the Imam changes his present suspicious and autocratic attitude and devolves some real authority to Ministers. I see little immediate prospect of this; and competent and trustworthy Ministers would anyway be hard to find.

I have, &c.

W. N. MONTEITH,

Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires.

SECRET

EM 1011/1

No. 42

THE YEMEN: ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 1955

Mr. Monteith to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received February 1)

(No. 6. Confidential)
Sir,

Taiz,
January 23, 1956.

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report on the Yemen for 1955, and a chronological list of the outstanding events.

2. The most notable events of the year were the unsuccessful *coup d'état* at the end of March, which changed little, and the granting in November to an American Company of an oil and minerals concession which may, if hopes are realised, change the country a great deal.

3. The background to the *coup d'état* needs little description; most Yemenis were, for various reasons, extremely dissatisfied with the reactionary and absolute rule of Imam Ahmed. The more immediate cause is not so clear; Saif Ul Islam Abdullah, the Imam's brother and Minister for Foreign Affairs, had almost certainly been plotting against the Imam, and the army officers who led the *coup* put him in temporary power, but whether they had conspired together or whether they acted on the spur of the moment is doubtful and may never be known, for those in the best position to know the truth are now dead. If they had been conspiring, they were remarkably incompetent about it. The *coup* took place on March 31, and was led by a Lieutenant-Colonel Ahmed Thalai, whose arrest the Imam had ordered on the previous day, blaming him for a fight between soldiers and villagers. After a little shooting, the Royal Bodyguard ceased resisting and the Imam was imprisoned in his palace; the rebels did not execute him, presumably because of his religious prestige, nor did they even guard him efficiently; they soon had cause to regret this. On April 1 it was announced that the Imam had agreed to abdicate on grounds of ill-health, and Abdullah, with a show of reluctance, was appointed in his place. The Imam's son, Saif Ul Islam Al Badr, immediately started some psychological warfare by sending out wireless reports from Hajja that he had raised the fighting tribes of the north and was marching on Taiz to rescue his father; these false reports, repeated from London, Aden and Cairo and daily telling of a nearer approach to Taiz, had a remarkable effect. The Imam meanwhile, being ill-guarded, laid his plans and sent messages to loyal tribal-leaders round Taiz. On the afternoon of April 4 he led his counter-attack with considerable courage, there was a night of continuous fighting and in the morning the rebels surrendered. The Imam quickly reasserted his authority; the leaders, or at least the supposed leaders, of the *coup* were publicly beheaded in Taiz between the 6th and 11th of April; Abdullah and his brother Saif Ul Islam Abbas, who had imprudently declared for him, were beheaded in Hajja a few days later. The Egyptian and Saudi Missions, which had hoped to come and negotiate between the Imam and the rebels, found nothing to do but congratulate the Imam on his victory.

4. For some months after the *coup d'état* there was of course considerable tension in the country, subversive pamphlets, probably printed in Egypt or Saudi Arabia, were distributed and there was much talk about the possibility of another revolt; that tension is now decreasing, but the Imam's unpopularity remains and another revolt might happen at any time if a suitable leader were to appear.

5. Some rather empty results may be attributed to the *coup*. The Imam took advantage of his victory to proclaim on April 8 that his son, Saif Ul Islam Mohammed Al Badr, would be his successor; this was probably aimed at his brother Saif Ul Islam Al Hassan, the then Prime Minister, who dislikes Al Badr, had previously openly disputed the nomination of a successor, and has ambitions of his own. Al Badr is being much praised in the Government-controlled press and Al Hassan, whom the Imam suspected—probably wrongly—of being distantly involved in the *coup*, has on one pretext or another been kept out of the country since it happened; but it is still anyone's bet which of them would win power if the Imam died.

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6. A few days after he had been proclaimed Crown Prince Al Badr went to Cairo to return the visit of the Egyptian Mission. There he thought fit to make some rather wild statements about constitutional reform in the Yemen, the vast treasure at San'a and the popular, constructive use that the Imam was going to make of it. This did not please the Imam; he had no ideas of constitutional reform and went so far as to say that if anyone, even his son, spoke of reform he would have his head cut off. Gradually, however, Al Badr and possibly others must have persuaded the Imam that some gesture was necessary to relieve the tension in the country for, in early September, it was announced that he had set up a Council of Ministers. The Imam was himself to be Prime Minister (Al Hassan had previously been demoted to mere adviser for, even by Yemeni standards, it would be difficult for the Prime Minister to carry out his duties in indefinite exile), Al Badr was to be Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the other Ministers were to be the same old Court sycophants and unexecuted princes. The populace therefore greeted the announcement with little enthusiasm and in this they seem to have been right; to start with the Ministers, Al Badr presiding, met and talked interminably but decided nothing; now it seems that they do not even talk. What the Imam meant this Council to be is not clear; perhaps in time it may develop on more usual lines, but so far no authority has been devolved to Ministers, and the Imam continues to take all decisions himself.

7. In short, the *status quo* has been restored except for some improvement in Al Badr's position; and he has taken little advantage of this except to bring about some improvements in police-training and to inaugurate supposedly regular service by Yemeni Airlines.

8. Economic affairs show rather more progress. In early November, after three weeks' negotiations in Taiz, an agreement was signed by which the Yemen Development Corporation of Washington was given the right to explore for and exploit oil and minerals in a large area of the northern Yemen excluding the coastal plain. Exploratory work is due to start shortly. Most Yemenis now seem convinced that almost every hill in the country is stuffed with gold, silver, coal, aluminium or uranium, and look forward to an immediate era of prosperity, development and high wages which will bring Yemenis flooding home from abroad; one can only hope that they will not be disillusioned.

9. Another hope of much-needed revenue comes from the German company of Deilmann Bergbau G.m.b.H., who have the oil concession near Salif on the coastal plain; they have finished their geo-physical work and are shortly to start drilling with, they think, an even chance of finding oil in commercial quantities.

10. Other commercial developments include the building by the French company, Société de Constructions des Batignolles, of a harbour of doubtful commercial importance at Mocha and a road from there to Taiz, neither work being better done than one would expect from a very cheap contract; also the construction by a Syrian Company of a spinning and weaving factory at Bajil, though this will probably not be in operation for at least a year.

11. The only other commercial enterprise of any importance, the Yemeni-run salt works at Salif, is doing little good; incompetent production and falling prices have left little margin of profit.

12. A development of non-commercial importance was the opening in June of the San'a Broadcasting Station. It started by broadcasting some anti-Aden propaganda, but soon became correct and rather dull. Technically it is a credit to the Egyptians who set it up but absurdly powerful for the needs of the country.

13. As for future development, the Italian companies of Ansaldo and Astaldi have together been trying for a long time, but without much success, to get a contract to build a cement factory at Bajil. There is also much talk of a new harbour at Ras Katib and a road from there to San'a; both would be expensive projects and it is not obvious where the money would come from—unless from oil or mineral revenues. The Imam, however, seems optimistic, for he has cancelled some arrears of taxes; though this, of course, may have been no more than a cheap way of gaining popularity by writing off what might have been extremely difficult to collect.

14. Less spectacular, but probably more useful, development was suggested by the food and agricultural organisation experts who visited the Yemen in September and October. They pointed out the great agricultural possibilities

mainly in the coastal plain; but, as either gravity or pump-irrigation needs not only capital but a good deal of organisation, their recommendations seem likely to remain in cold storage for some time.

15. An example of how the best-laid plans may here lead to nothing is given by the scheme for currency reform. The United Nations expert, Dr. Sieminski, drew up a detailed plan for new currency in silver and notes and for a monetary agency to control foreign exchange; with a Yemeni committee he obtained tenders from various countries and made recommendations to the Imam. Nothing has happened, so the Yemen continues to use Maria Theresa dollars, whose value it cannot control, and to conduct foreign business through a merchant in Aden whom it cannot control very much either.

16. Foreign relations remained confused. Perhaps the clearest point was the extreme difficulty experienced by any country in making agreements of any value with the Yemen. The Imam's views on co-operation, and his are the only views that matter, seem much the same as those of the Miller of Dee; he cares for nobody unless they can support his claims to the protectorates or can offer him something he needs. This isolationism and his grave suspicion of foreigners are of long standing; latterly, with the Foreign Ministry in Taiz, the Foreign Minister in San'a and the Imam in Hodeida, any form of negotiation has become more difficult than ever.

17. Relations with the United Kingdom, which mean principally relations with Aden, were not good though possibly slightly better than before; some of the local Europeans, not entirely without reason, describe the situation as a cold war. The Taiz Agreement of October 1954 remains unconfirmed, partly perhaps because any negotiations conducted by the late Seif Ul Islam Abdullah are automatically suspect. Efforts have continued throughout the year to arrange an air agreement between Aden Airways and Yemen Airlines; little progress has been achieved, but by the end of the year the prospects seemed rather brighter. Frontier incidents decreased, but the Yemen instead embarked with some success on a policy of aid and encouragement to malcontents in the protectorate; the flow of arms, mostly obtained from Egypt or Djibuti, has latterly decreased, though it has not entirely stopped, and a refugee from the protectorate can count on more generous treatment than the laws of even Arab hospitality demand. In spite of this, the Yemenis keep protesting their wish for better relations; though this may appear contradictory, it is not necessarily wholly insincere. They still hope to regain part at least of their one-time sovereignty over the protectorate, and the year ended with instructions sent to the Minister in London to suggest new negotiations on the subject; the possibility of oil in Salif also led them to renew their claim to the neighbouring island of Kamaran. No concrete proposals for a basis of negotiation have, however, yet been submitted.

18. Relations with other non-Arab countries have been mainly commercial; and the reason why the Yemenis prefer contracts with French or Italian firms is probably not that they like them better than British but that those who arrange the deal find it easier to get a private commission.

19. The French have been trying unsuccessfully to open a Consulate in Taiz; so have the Italians, but with equally little success even though the Yemen has been allowed to open a Legation in Rome. In October the Soviet-Yemeni Treaty of Friendship was renewed at, it is said, the Russians' request; the treaty meant little in the past, and there are yet no signs that it will mean any more in the future, though it is rather surprising that the Yemenis have not used it to obtain some arms; it is unlikely that the Russians will be encouraged to open a Legation here. A Treaty of Friendship was also signed with Japan.

20. Relations with the Arab world are a good deal more confusing. At the Bandoeng Conference the Yemen obtained Arab and anti-colonial backing to pass a resolution supporting "the position of the Yemen in the case of Aden and the southern parts of the Yemen known as the protectorates." But apart from that it has not shown much wish to co-operate.

21. With Egypt relations have become worse. An Egyptian Military Mission which was trying to train the Yemeni army was suspected of complicity in the *coup d'état*. The Egyptians were probably completely innocent, but of course the Yemeni soldiers could not have failed to note that other armies enjoyed much better conditions than they did; anyway, the mission was sent back to Egypt with

little accomplished. Then after the *coup d'état* two Free Yemeni leaders in Cairo, Mohammed Mahmood al Zubeiri and Ahmed Mohammed Noman, were allowed to broadcast scurrilous abuse of the Imam; and a paper *Saut Al Yemen* was published in Cairo by the Free Yemenis, probably with Saudi or Egyptian support, and containing similar abuse of the Imam. The Imam protested and publication was stopped and the broadcasts toned down, but the damage had been done. The Imam also found reason to believe that the Egyptian Government were supporting a plot to murder him. Understandable pique at this treatment then led him to make a wild suggestion of joining the Bagdad Pact, and to hint to the Sudanese that they would be better on their own than in union with Egypt. The Free Yemenis in Egypt later quarrelled among themselves and little has been heard of their anti-Imamic propaganda recently.

22. With Saudia Arabia relations, on the surface, are more friendly than with Egypt. King Saud has given the Imam two enormous Chryslers which are seldom used, and two Harvard training aircraft which are never used, and a few months ago sent a couple of doctors to treat the Imam as a friendly, though professionally unsuccessful, gesture. The Imam, however, remains suspicious of Saudi intentions, and probably rightly, for the fertile northern Yemen at least, with its possibilities of minerals, must be a considerable temptation to King Saud. Negotiations for some form of military agreement have been going on for some time but the Imam is showing little eagerness to speed their conclusion.

23. Relations with other Arab countries seem mainly limited to attending meetings of the Arab League and joining, on suitable occasions, in the anti-Israeli or anti-French chorus. However, a Legation has been opened in Beirut and liaison offices in Khartoum and Jedda, as well as Consulates in Mogadishu and Djibuti, so foreign relations may gradually become less peculiar.

24. The local press has been, for a change, remarkably restrained, particularly in its comments on Aden; the Aden press was, on occasions, less restrained in its comments on the Imam, which gave rise to some protests. However, the Aden Public Relations Officer was allowed to visit Taiz in November, and was well treated, as had been Colonel Slade-Baker of the *Sunday Times* and a French journalist earlier in the year, so the Yemen may be becoming rather less suspicious of the press of the outside world.

25. To sum up, the Yemen may be on the brink of considerable economic development; in other directions, there has been some progress in the last year, and it is reasonable to hope for more progress in the future, but this is likely to be very slow.

26. I am sending a copy of this despatch to the Governor of Aden and to the Head of the Political Office with the Middle East Forces.

I have, &c.

W. N. MONTEITH,

Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires.

Enclosure

CHRONOLOGICAL SUMMARY OF PRINCIPAL EVENTS

January

28 Visit by Colonel Slade-Baker of the *Sunday Times*.

March

30 *Coup d'état* led by Lieutenant-Colonel Ahmed Thalai.

April

5 Imam regains power.

8 Saif Ul Islam Mohammed Al Badr named as Crown Prince.

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May

27 Treaty of Friendship signed with Japan.

June

6 San'a Broadcasting Station opened.

July

12 Visit by Italian Trade Mission.

September

Council of Ministers appointed.

October

Weekly air services to Djibuti started.

Visit by Food and Agricultural Organisation Mission.

Yemeni-Soviet Treaty of Friendship renewed.

November

Oil and minerals concession granted to Yemen Development Corporation of Washington.

Visit by Mlle. Chateau of the French paper *Paris Soir*.

25 Visit by Mr. N. J. Watt, Public Relations Officer, Aden.

SECRET

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No. 43

LONG-RANGE POLICY IN ADEN PROTECTORATE

(No. 44. INTEL. Secret)

March 14, 1956.

The Governor of Aden will resume private discussions with the Protectorate Rulers shortly about the possibility of federating their States. Immediately after the meeting, which may take place on March 31, he will make a public announcement, the text of which is given in my immediately following paragraph.

2. "The Governor has recently held conversations with the Rulers of the Aden Protectorate with the object of explaining to them the long-term policy of Her Majesty's Government towards the States of the Protectorate. That policy is, in the Protectorate as elsewhere, to guide and assist all dependent territories towards the maximum political and economic development which the circumstances of each may warrant. It is the view of Her Majesty's Government that individually the States of the Aden Protectorate are too small in area, population, and resources to be able to become economically and politically fully developed and that therefore they should seek some form of closer association with each other for mutual assistance and support and in order to strengthen their internal economy and social organisation.

"The Rulers and peoples of these States are entirely free to negotiate among themselves, with such advice of Her Majesty's Government as they may require, such form of closer association as may suit them best, and which in due course will enable them to benefit by the declared policy of Her Majesty's Government. They shall further have complete freedom among themselves to choose or reject any proposal that may be made for the attainment of the objective of closer association. Her Majesty's Government will afford to any consequent combination of States assistance and protection similar to that which they now afford and will continue to afford to the individual States of the Protectorate."

3. The federation policy is not new. It was first approved in principle by Her Majesty's Government in 1952, subject to the agreement of the Rulers, in recognition of the fact that 20 small States cannot stand on their own feet if they remain separate.

4. From the occupation of Aden in 1839 until 1914 the neighbouring Rulers successively signed "Protectorate" treaties with Her Majesty's Government. Since 1914 most of them have also agreed to "advisory" treaties, whereby they have undertaken to accept Her Majesty's Government's advice in matters connected with the welfare and development of their States. In the case of federation the Rulers will not be compelled to accept the Governor's proposals. In fact some form of association would be welcomed by an increasing number of thoughtful persons in the Protectorate.

5. The Yemeni attitude towards Protectorate affairs, explained in my Intel No. 74 of 1955, is unchanged. Arab countries, perhaps with the support of members of the Soviet bloc, may be expected to denounce the proposals as an imperialist plot. In particular Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Yemen will probably step up their present criticism of the Rulers for their relationship with Her Majesty's Government, and suppress or dismiss as inaccurate the fundamental principle that the Rulers and people are completely free to choose or reject any form of integration.

6. We wish to avoid publicity about the new proposals, but if they are the subject of unfavourable comment, you should take whatever steps you can to make known the voluntary nature of the scheme and its advantages to the States concerned.

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EM 1051/14

No. 44

CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE SECRETARY OF STATE AND THE YEMENI MINISTER ON JUNE 22, 1956

Mr. Selwyn Lloyd to Mr. Monteith (Taiz)

(No. 18. Confidential)
Sir,Foreign Office,
June 22, 1956.

The Yemeni Minister, having been recalled by His Majesty the Imam for consultations, called on me to-day before his departure. He said that he might be away for three or four weeks.

2. I told Sayid Hassan Ibrahim that I knew personally Sir William Luce, who was to be the new Governor of Aden. He was known to be a friend of the Arabs and spoke Arabic. I hoped he would establish a personal relationship of friendship with the Imam and that this might in turn lead to a better atmosphere between our two countries. I went on to say that peace meant the stopping of mischief. Her Majesty's Government had no desire to stir up trouble in the Yemen and I hoped—though I could not be absolutely sure—that His Majesty had no desire to do so in the Aden Protectorate.

3. Sayid Hassan said it was very important to establish an understanding and he was much exercised about the way to do this. It was important to create a feeling of confidence and this started with individuals just as mistrust started with individuals. He would be happy if the new Governor could find a way to establish understanding.

4. I said that Britain was well known to be loyal and true to her friends. The Yemen was a small country and other countries were expanding. If the Yemen was thinking of her future independence, she would do well to realise that Britain as a friend was more reliable than other nations—I would mention no names. The Minister agreed and said that he maintained this thesis with everyone. The question was how to reach a more solid friendship. I replied that as a first step we should maintain quiet on the borders and calm down suspicions. We must become firm friends and the Yemen must remain an independent State. Despite what some people said of us in the Middle East, it was a fact that, for example, Jordan knew that her treaty with Britain was the one means of maintaining her independence. Libya had the same feeling. And the Sudan must have the same idea at the back of her mind. People liked power and were ambitious. Britain did not want to see the Yemen perhaps become the province of another State. The Minister said he highly appreciated these remarks.

5. I then turned to the question of our representation in Taiz and suggested that our two countries would be in closer touch if the Yemeni Government agreed to the appointment of a British Minister in Taiz. Sayid Hassan replied that he did not think he could say anything useful on this point. As I knew, the only foreign representatives whom the Imam had admitted into the Yemen were the Egyptians in Sana'a and the British in Taiz. To justify these concessions to his people, the Imam would have to show some benefits accruing from them. Moreover when relations were established it was Britain who decided to send only a Chargé d'Affaires initially. His Majesty accepted this at the time and afterwards incidents occurred so that it became difficult to encourage His Majesty to accept a Minister.

6. Sayid Hassan then made some vague reference to solving the "main dispute" though he did not mention the Protectorate in so many words. He thanked me warmly for the sentiments I had expressed about Anglo-Yemeni friendship, our desire to see the Yemen free and independent, the value of British support, and the friendly intentions of Sir William Luce, and said that he would convey them to His Majesty the Imam.

7. I am sending copies of this despatch to Her Majesty's Ambassadors at Washington, Cairo and Jedda, to the Acting Political Resident at Bahrain and to the Political Officer, Middle East Forces.

I am, &c.

SELWYN LLOYD.

SECRET

EM 10338/11

No. 45

VISIT OF THE CROWN PRINCE OF THE YEMEN TO THE SOVIET UNION

Sir William Hayter to Mr. Selwyn Lloyd. (Received July 2)

(No. 145. Confidential) *Moscow,*
Sir, *June 28, 1956.*

I have the honour to report that Saif al-Islam Muhammad al-Badr, Crown Prince of the Yemen, visited the Soviet Union at the invitation of the Soviet Government between the 11th and the 25th of June. He was described in the Soviet press as the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Yemen and was accompanied by the Minister of Finance.

2. During his stay Badr visited, in addition to Moscow, Baku, Sukhumi, the Black Sea coast of the Caucasus, Stalingrad and Leningrad. Despite the fact that Badr's visit began half way through that of Tito, that the Indian Vice-President arrived four days after him and that the Shah of Iran arrived on the day he left, the overworked Soviet leaders devoted more attention than one would have considered in any case due to this rather unimpressive representative of one of the poorest and most backward countries of the world. He was met by Shepilov and Pervukhin and seen off by Pervukhin. There was a guard of honour on both occasions. He had formal talks with the Soviet Government while in Moscow and was received at various times by Voroshilov, Khrushchev, Bulganin and other Soviet leaders. A Kremlin reception was squeezed into an already overcrowded week. A lunch given in his honour by Voroshilov, and a reception which he held at the end of his visit, were attended by the available members of the Presidium. The central press reported the Crown Prince's visit as prominently as was possible under the circumstances.

3. At the end of the visit a joint communiqué was issued, translation of which is enclosed.⁽¹⁾ Apart from the statement that the Soviet Union and the Yemen will enter into diplomatic relations (each will be represented by its ambassador in Cairo) and a reference to future trade (on terms

apparently advantageous to the Yemen) this document consists of generalities. I have no information apart from that contained in the communiqué of the subjects discussed by Badr with the Soviet Government. If he asked, as he probably did, for Soviet support over Aden, I should imagine that the Soviet Government were encouraging but non-committal (the issue has not been mentioned in the Soviet press).

4. At any rate it is not to the communiqué that we should turn in seeking reasons why the Soviet Government invited Badr to this country and paid him such flattering attention. The visit was part of the Soviet campaign to show that their declaration of April 18 implies no diminution of sympathy for the Arab cause. The Soviet Government may also have wished to demonstrate, particularly to the backward countries of Africa and the Middle East, that the smallest and weakest of countries has nothing to lose and probably something to gain by negotiating with the Soviet Union. The leading article in *Pravda* on the 26th of June claimed that Soviet-Yemeni relations show "the profound respect of the Soviet Union for the rights of small peoples, and its disinterested desire to help them in their struggle to strengthen national independence and social progress." No doubt, too, the Soviet Government wished to obtain yet another pro-Soviet voice, however small, in the councils of the Middle East; the Crown Prince said at the airport on his departure: "As long as I live I shall never forget the bonds of friendship which bind me to the Soviet people and their leaders. I am proud of their friendship."

5. I am sending a copy of this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Cairo and Taiz, and to the Political Office, Middle East Forces.

I have, &c.

W. G. HAYTER.

⁽¹⁾ Not printed.

SECRET

EM 10318/2

No. 46

VISIT OF THE CROWN PRINCE OF THE YEMEN TO EAST GERMANY

Enclosure to Bonn P/L Despatch No. 221 of July 10. (Received July 13)

Major-General F. D. Rome to Sir Frederick Hoyer Millar (Bonn)

(No. 44 S. Confidential)
Sir,

*Office of the G.O.C.,
Berlin (British Sector),
July 6, 1956.*

I have the honour to report that the Crown Prince of the Kingdom of the Yemen, Emir Seifel-Islam Mohammed el-Badr, who is also a deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, was the guest of the D.D.R. Minister-President, Herr Otto Grotewohl, and Foreign Minister, Dr. Bolz, from June 25 until July 1, 1956. He left for Prague on July 2. He was reported to be accompanied by a delegation comprising other Ministers of the Government, senior officials and business men.

2. The Crown Prince was received by President Pieck and had discussions with Herr Grotewohl, with Dr. Bolz, and with the Minister for Foreign Trade, Herr Rau. A joint communiqué was issued at the end of the visit. A trade and payments agreement, of which no details have so far been released, was concluded.

3. The communiqué, which was signed by Herr Grotewohl and by the Crown Prince in his ministerial capacity, deals mainly with two subjects of foreign policy: the development of relations between the D.D.R. and the Yemen, and the identity of view of the two Governments on the principles governing the conduct of international affairs. The sentence on the development of the two countries' relations runs (in translation) as follows:

"These negotiations (i.e., those carried on during the visit) provided further confirmation of the desire of both countries to maintain the traditional friendship which has always existed between the Yemeni and the German peoples, and of their wish to develop this friendship further and to establish normal relations between them at an appropriate time. Pending the arrival of that time, it was considered desirable to proceed with the development of economic relations and trade exchanges."

The announcement of the two Governments' views on international affairs said that they were agreed that international relations should be governed by the principles of the United Nations Charter and the resolutions of the Bandung Conference, that is to say: "mutual respect of sovereignty and of territorial integrity, non-aggression, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, the recognition of equal rights and peaceful co-existence."

4. The communiqué also records Yemeni agreement with the East German thesis that the German question should be solved by direct negotiations between the Germans themselves. In return, the East Germans agreed with the Yemenis that the political problems of the Middle East should be solved without interference from outside, in accordance with the will of the Middle East peoples, the United Nations Charter and the Bandung resolution. Both sides expressed the conviction that the demands of the Arab peoples could be satisfied by peaceful means and that this process should not be hindered by any foreign interference.

5. I am not in a position to judge the purposes of the Crown Prince's peregrinations through Eastern Europe and it is hence difficult to express an opinion as to whether he has achieved them. Whether the D.D.R. has assumed any important economic commitments towards the Yemen is still unknown. But the Crown Prince can and no doubt will interpret the terms of the communiqué as pledging the D.D.R.'s moral support to Yemeni aspirations regarding Aden, and will presumably demand at least as much of his other hosts behind the Iron Curtain.

6. So far as the D.D.R. is concerned, the barrier of diplomatic recognition has still to be pierced. On the other hand, the Government of the Yemen has gone about as far as it can in according *de facto* recognition and has gone a step

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further than any other non-Communist Government in explicitly confirming their desire for the establishment of diplomatic relations "at an appropriate time." Its Foreign Minister has conducted negotiations with the D.D.R. Foreign Minister: the D.D.R. has added another inter-governmental trade agreement to its fast growing list of such documents, and its economic penetration of the Middle East has made at least a start in another Arab country. If it has done nothing else, this Yemeni visit has provided one further illustration of the rich variety of inter-governmental relationships which are possible without formal diplomatic recognition.

7. I am copying this despatch to Her Majesty's Representatives at Taiz, Aden, Moscow and Prague and enclose additional copies in case Your Excellency should wish to forward them to the Foreign Office.

I have, &c.

F. D. ROME.

Major-General.